

The Prayer of Surrender

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Date: 01 September 2024

Preacher: James Tang

[0:00] Morning, everyone. Morning, morning. That's it. Are we here? Are we live? Morning. It's good to see you. I'm James, again, just like Alex, part of this gathering here.

We're doing something different. Actually, I feel obliged to at least give an intro, because I think each week there's probably different people who are coming for the first time. This is not what we normally do, but it's something that we're trying to do.

Actually, I'm going to take this off. With the sole reason of, I have this fear, and these intros are getting shorter and shorter, so if you're here every week, then don't worry, it'll get less painful. My fear is that we run through the motions.

You come to church on a Sunday morning, and you do church. You sing a few songs, you listen to someone do a TED Talk, and then you sing one more song, and then you go for lunch, and then that's it.

And so I have this fear that, one, the church ends up, the service ends up like a memorial service. We're just here to talk about a guy, remember a guy who used to live, who was a good guy, and that's it.

[1:00] And we all kind of just say hello and then goodbye. I'm also afraid that we turn our church service into like a birthday party, where we celebrate, we hold this party for someone, but then the birthday boy, we leave in the corner, and we completely ignore him.

I don't know why you're here. Part of it is to meet friends and to hear someone speak, but the main thing is to meet Jesus and to hear him speak.

And then it makes me think, what on earth are we doing if we want to meet Jesus and want to hear from him, and yet we don't spend any time or enough time praying? I think the church globally is going through this pandemic, epidemic of prayerlessness.

Have you been in a service where actually you've barely prayed? I have. And so for us, we're like, you know what, let's just stop. We're still small enough just to be able to say, hey, let's stop. Let's keep reminding ourselves, like with the statements, like with just what we're doing here, let's just keep reminding ourselves why we're here.

Isn't that the most important thing? That you don't want to just hear from me, you want to hear from Jesus. You want to walk away from here and go, man, I heard from God, and I spent time with him, and I spent time with his people.

[2:08] And so we're changing things up. We're not going to sing songs at the beginning just to kind of shock ourselves out of the system. If anything, this is a little bit more like the early church, how it began. It was only 500 years ago when a guy called Zwingli, a theologian from Switzerland, put the pulpit into the middle of the service and said, this is the most important thing.

And so you have the long sermon and you have everything else stressed around the side. Like in reality, when they first gathered, it was just to pray. And then they would open up the word and they would, back then it would have been the Old Testament and they would have just read through it. And then someone would have taught a little bit on it. And then they would have just worshipped and prayed. So we're going to try and do that for these next few weeks. And I hope that, yes, it may make you feel uncomfortable, but the goal is, can we get to a place where actually, man, I want to pray.

I want to get to know these people. I want to get to know God. And so that's kind of the heart behind it. Last week, and hopefully through these next few weeks, teach us some different tools about how to pray that may help you when you go home.

And last week we talked about the simple prayer. Pete Gregg talked about how you just pray what you've got. C.S. Lewis says, don't pray, don't lay before the throne what ought to be in you, just lay

before the throne what is in you.

[3:18] And if it's anger, if it's frustration, if it's fear, if it's anxiety, just pray those things. That's okay. You can be like a child to God and just tell him, I want this.

I need this. I'm so tired of this. I'm so angry about this. I'm so worried about this. And you just come to him and you just go, God, this is where I'm at. No pretense, no pretending.

This is what I'm worried about and I want to give it to you. And I trust that you care about me. And so that was a simple prayer where you just pray what you've got. And I taught us a different kind of different things to help us.

Because why? Because prayer is hard. Prayer is hard. Whether you pray on your own, whether you pray in a group, it's often very hard. So we're trying to just equip each other with some tools. St. Teresa was the one who said, everyone's a beginner when it comes to prayer.

Even if you've prayed for years, you can still go back to this childlike prayer and say, God, I'm angry. That's okay. And so that's what we're going to try and do. And I told you that actually different people have different things to pray, ways to pray.

[4:18] John Mark Homer was the one who every morning wakes up and faces east and just prays east because that's where the Bible says that's where Jesus is going to return. And so it's kind of his way to remind himself, Jesus is returning.

I want to focus on him. I want to be ready for him. So we're going to teach different ones. And I'm going to teach us one today that I found particularly interesting. It will require a little bit of movement.

So what I'm going to ask you to do, actually, before I ask you to stand, because at the moment you stand, none of you will see me. So this is what we're going to do. Now, it's called the body prayer that I've been doing every day.

And actually, I only recently learned this. And so I'll do it in front of all of you first, just to kind of embarrass myself a little bit. It's called the body prayer. And there's four parts that I'm going to talk you through. I do this every morning because actually when I wake up in the morning, I'm super groggy.

My mind is all over the place. And something about prayer is that you've got to do it like if you're really going to connect and pray to God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, your body is a part of that.

[5:18] You know, typically, actually, the most common prayer style body posture wise in the Bible is lying prostrate on the floor. Okay, so that's the most common one.

So you won't see this, but I'll just do it. That's the prayer. The second most common style is this. Every time you see someone pray in the Bible, they're doing either lying on the floor completely prostrate or they are standing with their hands up.

The kind of prayer that we do these days, you cannot find one example in the Bible.

Isn't that interesting? And yet here we do. I'm convicted that when we pray, our bodies are very important.

If you watch friends talk, I had a lunch with Aidan and Alex and Ken just in the summer and we had lunch and man, that group is loud. And they're talking and their arms are waving and it's just, they're just so impassioned about roast goose and all those kinds of things that you pray with your body.

[6:32] So this is the body prayer. So the first part is this and you feel free to do it at home. I really enjoy doing it myself every morning. And the first one is this. Okay, so the guy who taught me, he was like, hey, touch your toes.

And I was like, I've never been able to touch my toes, even when I was 10 years old. But anyway, you do this. And then you shake, you just basically shake. And what you do is when you're praying this prayer, you're basically just shaking off any, anything that's not of God.

Any bad vibes, any fears, any anxieties, any pride, anything that you know that shouldn't be in your heart and shouldn't be in your body. You're just shaking it off. Just shake, shake, shake it off. Okay, so that's the, that's the first prayer.

Okay. Okay. And after that, you then stand up and then you lift up your hands to do the very common posture of prayer in the Bible, which is you lift it up and you go, actually, I've shaken off all the things that aren't of you. And now I just focus on you.

God, you are worthy to be praised. Hallowed be your name. What's that? It means you're different. God, you are so different. You're so big. I don't even dare imagine knowing who you truly are.

[7:31] And then after that, you do this. And it is the kind of a hugging yourself prayer. And this is the one where you just receive whatever God has given you, the warm embrace of what God has given you.

Actually, may I operate from today, knowing that I am loved, knowing that I'm safe, knowing that he is near and he's close to me. And after that, you open up your hands like this and you offer a prayer to God and say, whatever I've just received from you, I now give back to you.

Use it for your glory. Just take it back. Use it. Use me. And freely I receive and now freely I give. So those are the four parts. Is that okay? Right. Can I invite you to stand?

We're going to quickly do the body prayer together. So you might have to kind of make a little bit more space for you, for yourself. Now, you can do this for however long you want.

My back won't let me do it for too long. And we'll do it short. But actually, I encourage you, if you're looking for ways to start your day, this is a great one. Okay? So let's start by just kind of reaching towards your toes and shaking off.

[8:35] Shake it off. And I will lead us in a prayer now. God, we come to you with any fatigue we have, any cynicism we have, any fears, any worries, any pride, any insecurity.

There are so many things that trouble us in this day. And so we shake it all off. Holy Spirit, we give it to you. Release it all to you. And then we stand up, reach out.

Try not to hit the person next to you. There we go. Can you imagine the upper room in Acts 1? This is probably how they prayed. Look around. Isn't that crazy?

It's just people going, God, you alone are holy. You alone are worthy. There is none like you. You are God in heaven.

And here we are on earth. Let our words be few. You are so much bigger than we realize. And we are so much smaller.

[9:45] So we lift our prayers up to you. And then we embrace ourselves and hug ourselves. Give yourself a really big hug. Lord, there are so many of us who are in need of intimacy.

We yearn for love. We struggle with loneliness. And yet here you are all wrapping your arms around us.

Can you allow us to feel your warm embrace today? Whatever we think, whatever we say, whatever we do, comes from a place of knowing that we are loved by you.

But just like a parent with a child, just you hug us, you wrap your arms around us. Never let us forget. We are loved.

We are your children. Your grace just covers us. Even when we don't feel it. And finally, we open up our hands and we offer it to you.

[10:57] That love that we've just received from you. We seek to pass on to those who need it. Those gifts you've given us. We seek to use them for your glory.

Our cups, they overflow. May they overflow. For those of us who feel empty, Lord, would you fill us up so that we can then pour out to others? We know this day isn't about us.

We know it's about you being lifted high, being glorified. And so we serve you. We look to you. We worship you.

And we give everything that we have to you. In your name we pray. Amen. Please take a seat. So I hope that's helpful.

I hope that's a that'll be a fun way for you to try. If you're thinking, okay, I've got to stop my prayer. And you could do all of those actions within 10 seconds. It'll probably really hurt you. But it's just a good way just to start your day.

[12:11] And I hope that helps you. The other thing I taught us last week, again, it's not because I created it, but it's called Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina is just a way to pray through scripture. And we're actually going to do that again today.

Does anyone remember how many parts there is to Lectio Divina? Anyone remember? Me? Four. Yes. Four. Of course, they're described in Latin, but in English, the first one will be read.

So you simply read it. When you open up the scripture, let's say you've just done the body prayer in the morning and you're like, okay, I want to start the day with some scripture. So I'll pick a passage and we've been going through the songs of ascent, which are just simple prayers that Jesus would have prayed, that all the Jewish people heading to worship would have prayed these prayers.

and you take a simple passage, doesn't have to be too long, and then you do these four steps. And the first stage is simply you read it. Okay? And Lectio Divina simply means divine reading.

So you're reading it and then asking God, show me something. Tell me something. I want to hear from you. I don't just want to read and tick it off. I want to hear from you.

[13:17] If the word of God is living and active, this is what I want to hear from. So what you do is first you read it and then afterwards you read it again for the second time, but this time you reflect on it.

And as you read those words, you're like, oh, what does that actually mean? Oh, that's interesting. And you just reflect. You can let your mind wander a little bit if you need to. And then you read it for a third time and this time you respond.

You're like, oh God, man. Yeah, I'm reflecting on that and that means something to me. You're telling me something here. I need to do something. I need to act on this. And then the fourth one is you rest in it.

You read it again because it's not all about doing. It's not all about instructions and obeying. It's about then just resting in him going, oh God, I receive this and I'm just going to rest in this passage, this word.

Okay, so we're going to do that today and we're going to do it on another Psalm. It's Psalm 127. Afterwards, I actually asked two of our dear members of this family, one Hank and Cara, who actually have been doing this this week already and just reflecting and they're going to come up and share with us what their experience was like as they went through this passage.

[14:23] Is that okay? So we're going to try it. This is Lectio Divina. If you need more information about this, if you're like, oh, that's a cool way. I'd like to, I'd be interested in that. Just Google it, Lectio Divina. Actually, there's an app. There's multiple apps that lead you through it.

So feel free to have a look at those. But what we're going to do is I'm going to read through Psalm 127. Because we're doing it four times, I won't ask us to stand. But I hope you share that thought with me that the Word of God is something to be revered.

This is a big deal. This isn't just reading tweets or Instagram posts. This is the Word of God that has lasted thousands of years that is still here today. That speaks to us today.

And we're asking the Holy Spirit to speak to us in it. Okay? So why don't we spend a moment now just to calm our hearts. I'm actually going to sit down because I'm not the center of this. But...

Whatever we've come in here with today, we calm our hearts and we seek only you.

The words of this psalm, a song attributed to Solomon, will be on the screen.

[15:48] But you can also feel free just to close your eyes and listen to it. It's a short one. It's five verses, just in case you're worried. And we're going to do the first one where we're just simply going to read it.

Holy Spirit, as we open up your Word, speak to us. Calm our hearts.

Steady our thoughts. So that we can hear from you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Psalm 127.

Psalm 127. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil, for he gives to his beloved sheep.

[17:01] Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.

Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them. He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

This is the word of the Lord. I'm going to read it for a second time now and this time reflect on the words.

What's the author trying to say? What's God trying to show you? A Song of Solomon.

Psalm 127. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

[18:29] It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil, for he gives to his beloved sheep.

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.

Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them. He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. Amen. Amen. Amen.

. a third time.

This time, ask yourself, how can I respond to this? What about my life is he trying to address?

[19:56] A song of Solomon, Psalm 127. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil, for he gives to his beloved sheep. Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord. The fruit of the womb a reward, like arrows in the hand of a warrior, are the children of one's youth.

Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them. He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. So we've read We've reflected We've sought to respond And so finally we just rest As we read it one last time Just rest In these words These words that transcend time Heaven and earth shall pass away But the word of the Lord remains

And just rest in The security we get from reading this And learning from this A song of Solomon Psalm 127 Unless the Lord builds the house Those who build it Labour in vain Unless the Lord watches over the city The watchman stays awake in vain It is in vain that you rise up early And go late to rest Eating the bread of anxious toil For he gives to his beloved sheep Behold Children are a heritage from the Lord The fruit of the womb A reward Like arrows in the hand of a warrior Are the children of one's youth Blessed is the man who fills his quiver With them He shall not be put to shame

[22:43] When he speaks With his enemies In the gate This Is the word of the Lord So That's 10 minutes 12 minutes I've found that it's just a Good way to start your day Just to be like Oh gosh Hey Freddie This is the most important thing These are words of truth That I can impact Into How I go about my day So I actually asked Two friends To reflect on this passage This last week Just to kind of See what they received I don't know what was going through your mind Maybe the first time You were just like all over the place It was just What's happening here?

What are we doing? And then the second time You're like Oh okay I'm stilling a little bit Oh what does that even mean? And the third time You're like Oh Oh that's for me And so just To go through that I've got two friends I'm going to invite I want to invite ladies first So Cara If you're around I'm just going to Bring her up here And as she was praying Through this Trusting that the Lord Has something for her as well Alex and Cara Our dear friends Alex is in the back Carrying Ari I think right now They were with us From the very beginning From KFC! And then When we started The family gathering And they're just Actually long long long Long time friends Of senior pastor Peter Lam From Kongfuk Churchside So that's I really wanted to Bring Cara up And she's going to Share with us How she thought About this passage And I don't know Maybe Did you read it In English or Chinese?

You read it in both Okay that's cool So anyway I'm just going to Give it over to you Just to share What you received It's here if you need it Thank you James For asking to share I'm not usually Asked to be Speaking in a public Place so Bear with me This week I've been Meditating and Reflecting on this Passage I actually Took James' Advice I did it in English and Chinese And he Encouraged me To memorise This as well So I did And it's actually Very helpful Because once You actually Internalise it It just comes In even more So here A couple Quick personal Thoughts that I Have First thing Is In reflection When I'm reading I just feel A lot of comfort I have a lot of Peace reading This passage Because Knowing that God is in Control Of it all And I think That this is Very important To me Like growing up

I know that God is there And that He is in Control of Everything It just brings Me a lot of Peace And he Talks about How God Is actually Partnering With the People Unless God is Building Unless The Lord Builds the House Those who Labor Those who Build it Labor in Fain And unless God watches Over the City The watchman Stays awake In faint And not Only Is he In control He is Actually Asking me To partner With him And knowing That God Is partnering With us Gives me A lot Of comfort And he Provides As well Later on In the passage He talks About children And I Just feel So so Loved By the Lord When I Was resting In the Word In his Presence I can Feel that He Is so Loving And After all I'm just A sinner You know I for sure Every day I'm just I'm undeserving Of all These but Time after

Time Lord is Still Pursuing After me And he's Loving Me To like No end This gives Me a lot Of comfort And then The second Thing is The word Unless Unless Means It's like Conditional Like unless God is There In reflection I feel like If God Is not In the Things that We do Like it's Meaningless The passage Talks about Everything is In vain If he's Not there Like whatever You do Is a waste Of time And it Just gives Me like It reminds Me it's a Good reminder That whatever I do

Like cannot Leave God Out of it Like he Just has to Be there And then Later on The passage Talk about Children I grew Up in Church This passage Is actually Very familiar To me I read About it Many many Times But I Think I Did not Understand It deeper Until I

[27 : 29] Have my Own So my Daughter Is one Year old Now She's Actually Turning 13 months End of The week Sometimes Well when I read The passage Children Like they Are like Arrows In the Hand of a Warrior Some days I feel like This passage Read They are Like grenades In the Hand of a Warrior My child Is so Wildcat But then She is a Heritage She is a Gift From the Lord Which prompts Me to Think like What kind Of legacy I can leave Behind for my Child Like what Gift can I Give to her Now that I've Received such A great gift From God Very early On in Our Journey of Expecting That my Daughter is Born Alex and I just Recognize that She is Our child That is Entrusted to

Us by The Lord But after All she Is God's Child She is God's Daughter So am I I'm God's Daughter I think The best Thing that We can Do as Parents Is to Point Her To God So that She can Have a Personal Relationship With God I think That is Like the Biggest Legacy If we're Talking about Heritage It's like The biggest Legacy that I can give To her Other than Well we Don't have A lot of Fortune We We just Don't have Anything But I Think Like a Reflection My prayer For her Is that She will Learn Grow to Understand The Lord Know His heart And love People around Her well So yeah I think That's like The biggest Legacy Thank you Thank you Thank you So much Thank you Thank you So much Actually it's Incredible Even just Having Being able to

Hear other People hear From God As well And it's Just different She picked Out things That I Never noticed Either And that's The beauty Of what We're doing Here We all Have access To him To hear From him To commune With him So the Second person I'm going To bring Up Is Hank Now Hank Can I Invite you Up We can Give Hank A round Of applause As well Unless the Lord builds The house Those who Build it Build it In vain Unless the Lord used Hank We actually All wouldn't Be here Okay Because Hank Here is The chairman Of the deacons Board of The wider Church Gong Ful Tong He looks Like a Very serious Man But I Assure you This guy This man Is God Fearing And just Has the Softest Heart Honestly And actually There's often This thing About okay What are your Church leaders Doing What are they Like Are they Like CEOs In a boardroom And they Have their Meetings In the Dark No This Actually Himself Tony And Agnes I've Just watched Them just Be such Faithful People Who pray There's one Time I Try not To embarrass Him We're In a Smaller Prayer Meeting And Hank Got down On his Knees To pray And I Saw from Across the Room I was like That's Someone That I Want to Follow Someone Who just Is willing To do That I was Mildly Worried He Wouldn't Be able To get Back up But he Did To But it Was That Show Of Humility That Just Inspires Me To keep Serving With a Brother Like him So he Also has Been Reflecting On the Same Passage And he's Now just Going to Bless us With what He Received Thank you Very much For inviting Me I Happen To have Recently Built A house And I Happen To have A lot Of kids But I'm Not going To talk About my Personal Life About my House Or my Kids I'll Spend The next Few minutes Just talk About

The thing That Mostly Occupers My Time And my Life I'm Very much Retired And most Of the Time I Spend I spend Serving In the Church This Church Is my Church It's our Church But at The same Time It's Really God's Church It's Not Really Mine I'm Just Helping To take Care Of I Think This First Part Of The message Of Psalm 127 Is Very Clear This Is God's Church The Privileged To have A small Part In it And God Allow Me To Spend Some Time Helping To Shape Some Of The Strategy Of The Church The Things That We Need To Do God So The

[32 : 32] Fact That It's God's Church Also Gives A lot Of Comfort That I Don't Need To Worry About Messing Up Okay By the Way Everywhere You Go You Always Face Criticism Even In A Church So Many Of The Things That We Do We Get Criticized But It's God's Church As Long As We Truly Believe We Following His Will I Think There's One Fellow In North America Called Larry Osborne He Wrote A Book About Sticky Church Very Good Book By The Way He Talk About In Many Settings Including A Church You Always Have Squeaky Wills They Will Always Make Noises Doesn't Matter How Much You Fix It It Will Always Make Noises That Bother You Don't Be Bothered By It Okay This Is God's Church Do The

Best You Can To Help Be Grateful To Be Part Of It I'm Very Grateful I'm Part Of This I'm Very Grateful I've Been Able To Help Not Just In Building!

KFCI Helping To Recruit John Snell Grove And John Help Recruit James And James Spott And All These Young Leaders That We Have So Be Grateful For It Because It's God's Church The Second

Part It's To Me It's All About Building Up The Next Generations I'm Very Grateful That While Nominally To The Board Tony And I Are Still Very Much Involved In Leading This Group But We Didn't Have To Do Much Of Anything It's Joseph It's Alex It's Aaron It's Obviously James Doing All The Leading Okay I Am Truly Seeing God's Work In This In Bringing Up Our Next Generation Leaders That Tony And I Will Be Facing Out Pretty Soon But This Is The Whole Point About This Church We Want To Do It In A Family Setting Bring Up The Next Generation And You Guys Will Carry On And Build This Church Up Thank You Very Much Thank You Hank Just It's Good Just To Hear For All Of Us To Hear A Little Bit Of The Heart For The Church Leadership And Just Maybe To Add On One Thing There Is No Joe Without Alex There Is No Alex Without Kara There Is No Aaron Without Rebecca And There Definitely Is No James Without Christina Okay So This Is A Whole This Is A Whole Team And A Whole Family Together Just Wanting To Just Seek The Lord In All Of This And Recently I Introduced A Few Friends To A Mentor Of Mine And I Told Her Hey This Is My Friend And He's In Charge Of This Ministry And This Is My Other Friend And She's In Charge Of This And My Mentor Just Said Oh James You Have People In Charge Of Things Do You Implying That You Don't You're Not In Charge Or Anything God's In Charge And God's In Charge And That's Okay We're Just Here To Follow Instructions So Thank You Cara Thank You Hank And What I'm Going To Do Now Is In A Bit I'm Invite Paul To Lead Us In A Time Of Worship And Prayer But Before Then I Want Share A Unless The Lord Builds The House Those Who Build It Labor In Vain And Then It Talks About Security Unless The Lord Watches Over The City Those Who Are Watching Over It They're Staying Awake In Vain It Is In Vain That You Rise Up Early And Go Late To Rest And You're Eating The Bread Of Anxious Toil And Then He Talks About Children What The Psalmist Is Security And We Need Family Right Those Are [36 : 51] Things When You Think How Good Is Your Life Right Now You're Thinking About This Do I Have A House Do I Have A Place To Stay Or Can I Pay Rent That's The Big Thing Right And The Second Thing Is Do I Feel Safe Those Of Of Who Have Grown In The West And We've Gone Recently That's All Of Us That's All We're Doing And Of Course We're Also Looking For Family This Psalm Tells You Something Which Is Interesting Which Is Hey God's The One Who Gives You All These Things And The First Question I Had Was This What Building Projects Do I Have In My Life James What Are The Projects That You've Got Going In Your Life That You Think You're Building Maybe It Is A House That You're Trying Maybe It Is A CV Maybe It Is Some Kind Of Ambitions For Your Work Whatever It Is We All Have Our Building Projects Do We Not

We All Have Them Whether We Admit To It Or Not We All Have Our Building Projects Of Where We Want To Get To And What God Is Saying! Hey He Will He Might Give Us These Things But Unless He Builds It You're Doing It In Vain What He Wants To Do Is Partner With You In It He Doesn't Need You But He Does Desire You That's The Goal Of What He's Trying To Do Here And So What Building Projects Do We Have That Actually We Need To Surrender This Is A Prayer Of Surrender This Is Well God You Know Actually None Who's Fairly Comfortable With Where They're At In Their Life Like I've Got A Decent House I've Got A Nice Family I've Got This Freddie You're Happy That's Good Man Long May That Continue!

Work That I Put In I Studied Hard I Am Studying Hard As A Doctor To Pass My Exams I Am Working I Got To Where I Am Because Of What I Did My Efforts And That Sounds Admirable And That Sounds Almost Right Until You Realize Well But Aren't You Just Where You're At Because Of Where You Were Born And The Family You Were Born Into!

You Can Work As Hard As You Want You're Probably Not Sitting Where You Are Right You Might Have Studied Really Hard For Your DSEs And For Your University Degree But If Your Family Didn't Put You Into The School You Went Into You Didn't Have A Choice Which Family You Got Put Into! Builds The House Those Who Build It Labor In What Building Projects Have You Taken On I Got To Do This This Makes Me Think Of This Church As Well Hank Was Talking About Church I'm Looking At This Church Such Such A Such A Great Thing That We're Doing It's So Exciting We Get To Have Wine!

[40 : 23] Tasting Class And Classes And Those Who Are Frustrated With Each Other But What Good Are We If God Is Not Building This What Terrifies Me The Most Is You Could Build Something That Looks Very Shiny And Big On The Outside But God Is Not In It Jesus Talks To The Church In Revelation And Says That You You Forgotten Why You Were Here And Now What Am I Going To Do I To Tear You Down I Want To Break It Down These Things Unless The Lord Builds The House

Those!

Who Build It Labor In Vain We Seeking Prosperity We're Seeking A Building And Security Unless The Lord Watches Over The City Those Who Watch Over It Stay Awake In Vain Don't We All Want That Like The Security Don't You Want That When It Comes To Health We Were Just My Brother And We're Just Sharing Actually We've Always Enjoyed Flying But Him And Alex And EJ Have Just Came Back And Christina That Turbulence That She Experienced Flying Back To The K With The Kids And When You're On A Plane You Put That Seat On That That That's Cute But If There's Something Wrong With The Plane If there's something wrong with outside, you're not in control. You can hold tight onto that seatbelt, but you're not really in control. We look for security. We look for health. Those of you who have kids, you're like, oh God, please just look after my kids. Please just, when they cross the road, like, you know, you don't have any control and you have to surrender. You know, I could do it. I could be right next to my kids and they will still get hurt. Unless the Lord watches over the city, those who stay awake, stay awake in vain. And that's the pandemic showed us that you can do whatever you want. You can spray your hands as much as you want to. You can wear three masks, but if it's coming for you, it's coming for you and it's coming for the whole world. And there's nothing you can do about it. Where's your security? So one, what building projects are you embarking on?

Number two, where do you think you're actually getting that security from? What security are you craving? And do you realize that actually God is the only place you can find that?

And then it says this, and it's interesting. It says, it is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, which is what Hong Kongers do. Eating the bread of anxious toil. You'll get some bread, but it is anxious toil. You're eating it and you're just anxious. You're like, oh, I've worked hard for this. I'm still nervous. And you see this everywhere. You see, I've met people who are very high up in their industry and they're contemplating giving up their job. And I've heard them say this and it's surreal. The moment they say it to me, they're like, oh yeah, I might, I might finish my job, but you know, I'm just, I'm just worried about my finances. And they're like a partner of this firm. And I'm like, oh, you're worried about your finances.

Oh, anyway, your driver's just about pulling up and coming to pick you up now. And that's an extreme example, but don't we have that? Oh God, I'm so worried. And every time I do work harder, and that's why I have to work harder. Because when you're working harder, when you're staying up late and when you're getting up early to do the best that you can, now that isn't a bad thing. God created us to work and do well. But if that is coming from a place of, if I don't do this, I won't get what I want. I won't get the prosperity that I want. I won't get the security I won. Then you've got it wrong. Then you've got it twisted. Because then this next line is key. And I wanted to show you another type of prayer that you can do. The next line says this, for he gives to his beloved sheep. He's like, you're doing everything in vain. You're building that project. You're trying to stay awake to keep your family healthy and safe. You're trying to work hard. All of it is in vain. Why? Why is it in vain? Because he gives to his beloved sheep.

[44:40] And this is another type of prayer I want to help you. If doing Lectio Divina for a whole psalm is too long, I encourage you just to pick one line like this and pray that one line. And this is how you do it. And I think this is a fascinating, it is an easy way to do it. What I would do is I would actually highlight different words as I'm praying this prayer. So, and I'll reflect on it. I'll tell you what I mean. For he gives to his beloved sheep. While I do, as I'll pray, I'll go, for he gives to his beloved sheep. Him, not anything else. For he gives to his beloved sheep. And just rest in that and just remind he's the one who is doing this. And once you've finished the first word, you can do the second one.

For he gives to his beloved sheep. What does that mean? That means it's not from us. We can't get it ourselves. He's the one who gives. He's the giver. Man, it's not even me. For he gives to his beloved sheep. Then I reflect on that. And then I'm like, oh, are we okay? You okay there, Flo? Sleep. It is not sleep. Though sleep is also very important. Sleep, sleep, sleep.

Oh my goodness. Anyway, sorry. I'm wrong. Thank you, Flo. Flo. Thank you, Flo, for that. Helpful. Let me try and spin that. So.

Well, then this is the beautiful thing about prayer. It does not have to be perfect. And it can be broken up. It can be laughed about. Thank you, Flo. That's super helpful because that changes my sermon altogether. For he gives to his beloved sleep.

[46:50] Fine. We can go with that. For he gives to his beloved. What's that? That's my goodness. I'm his. I belong to him. For he gives to his beloved. And then that word beloved is the key one that I would just stay on. I'd be like, beloved, what does that mean? That I'm actually loved. That's the key of all of this. Because if we don't get that point, we will build our own projects. We will stay awake at night because we don't realize that we are loved.

Oh. And then sleep, not sheep. But sleep is very important, isn't it, Christina? Super important. For he gives to his beloved. Sleep. Rest. When you can sleep at night sleep, it's because you know that you're not in control. But you can close your eyes because it's going to be okay. When you don't sleep, when you can't sleep, that's when you're worried because you think that by you not sleeping and by you grafting and doing something, you'll get what you need. No, you can rest easy like a weaned child with his mother from last week.

You are content. For he gives to his beloved sleep. So that's one way to pray and you can laugh about that, how I got the words wrong there. And when you understand that, that you can rest, there's a couple of things that happen. First of all, you're just filled with gratitude. You're like, oh God, I'm yours. You give it and I can rest. I'm just thankful.

The second thing is you're gracious because you're like, man, it's not from me. It's not because of me. That means, wait, that means on the surface, I look better than you and I've got my life together in a way that you don't. But that's only because he gives me the gifts of grace right now that I'm receiving. It's not because of me. It's not because of how good I am. And so I'm praying for the same grace to fill your life. And then you're also generous with your time, with your efforts, with your love. For he gives to his beloved sleep. And finally, it's the children part. And we're actually not going to focus too much on this because Kara already said it. Children are a gift. And it really convicted me of something which is, oh, I don't know if I pray for my children enough. And I'll tell you, Christina and I, we pray for our kids every day. But I don't think we pray for them enough. Because they're growing up in a broken and twisted and crooked world. And they need prayer. And I don't know if we pray for them enough.

[49:54] There's a slide that actually has the name of our children that I'm going to put up on the screen. Roger's going to find it for me. And the idea is actually, can we lift up the kids in our community and pray for them? Because I'll tell you this. If the kids are only going to do well because of their parents, then we're in trouble. Our kids need our prayers.

Our kids need our prayers. And so what I want to do is I'm going to invite Paul just to start us off on a time of reflection. And we're going to pray about different things today.

But we're going to go work our way back and we're going to start with praying for the children who are a heritage from the Lord. Hank talked about the next generation. I mean, I hope that him and Tony are not tapping out soon because I'd love for them to continue sharing their wisdom with us. But that's the heart.

That's the heart. Do we care enough about the next generation that we would pray for them? And here are just some of the names. I hope, I sincerely, earnestly hope that I've not made any mistakes and made any spelling mistakes or missed any kids out. But I want to invite us to pray.

There's different groups of children I want to invite you to pray for. If you have kids of your own, I want you to pray for them. Pray with the person sitting next to you and tell them your kids' names and pray for them. Second, if you don't have kids, then you will have nieces and nephews and friends who have kids. Pray for them. After that, there are the kids who are specifically part of this family here. Pray for them. Pray because their parents often don't know what we're doing.

[51:50] We're trying to figure out how to not make so many mistakes so we don't screw up our children's lives in the future by saying the wrong thing, doing the wrong thing, not prioritizing them. Pray for them. And afterwards, we're going to then spend some time praying for some of the different things, health, security, and even some of the building projects that we've got. And we just surrender and go, this building project that I have, whatever it might be, and it might actually be a building project. Then you surrender that and go, oh God, thank you for partnering with me and helping me build this. But it's not going to work unless you're the one who's actually building it.

Thank you for letting me take part in choosing some of the furniture and the curtains. But it's you. It's you. It's always been you. So why don't we do that? Paul's going to sing a song over us. Feel free to join him as he sings as well, or just listen to his lovely voice and have it be blessed by it. And then just pray. Children first. Let's spend time. This is where this, just to clarify, this is where you have to turn to your neighbor. I'm sorry. Love your neighbor. Turn to your neighbor.

You don't have to say much. Just your own name. Just the names of the kids that are on your heart or the ones here. And just spend some time praying for a few minutes. Is that okay? All right. Now we've finished introducing, maybe let me start us off in a word of prayer.

Jesus, this is a prayer of surrender. This is our prayer of surrender. Whether it's building projects, whether it's security, whether it's our children. First of all, we give our children to you. We surrender our children to you. I mean, they were never ours in the first place, as Kara said. They're from you, for you, and ultimately will return to you.

[53:48] So as a body, as your body, as your family, we lift up these children to you. I know there's a lot of people in the room, so maybe we have to keep our voices low, but why don't we start praying now for the kids that are on the screen and also in our own lives.

Let us pray. So Lord, we surrender.

We give up our dreams, our fears, our ambitions for our kids. We surrender everything because we know that children are a gift from you, a heritage from the Lord.

We pray for baby Theo, for Akachi, for Josiah, for Ellie, for Bella, for Sam, for Ruben, Alicia, Micah, Roro, and Riri, Ari, EJ, Jacob, and Talia, Estelle, and Angelica, and Theo, and Myla, and Asher, and Evelyn, and Theoden, Alvin, Aaron, baby Rotho, and any other children in our care in this family, the children that are yet to be born, the children that are being faithfully and wonderfully made.

We lift them up to you. We surrender any control that we think we have over them. You are their strength.

[55:53] You are their shield. You are their refuge. And Lord, we need refuge from this. From this world. From the hurt.

From the brokenness. Would you cover them? Would you cover them as they enter into school? Would you cover them as they grow up and see the brokenness that surrounds, the anxiety that surrounds?

Let them know that they are dearly beloved. Dearly beloved. The next and final part of prayer.

Can we bring those building projects that we have to each other now? And if there's something that you just need to share with the group, maybe you don't know that person, maybe you know them super well. Is there a building project in your life that you need to surrender?

And recognizing that unless the Lord builds it, you will build it in vain. Is there security that you're after? That actually, that won't come from you.

[57:21] That your efforts in rising early, going late to rest, are in vain. Share with each other what the building projects are.

And then just pray for one another. Lord, we just want you.

Lord, we just want you. Lord, take everything else away. We just want you. You are the one who's been there all along.

You are the one who grants us rest. You are the one who builds our house. You are the one who keeps us safe. You are the giver of gifts.

Every good and perfect gift comes from you. And so we surrender. Lord, your will be done.

[58:32] Your kingdom come. Nothing else will do. So we surrender our building projects to you. The things we're trying to build for ourselves.

The reputation. The reputation. Accomplishments. Our church. Our house. Our family. Our careers. Our health. Our safety. I guess it's funny because none of those things are really from us and by us anyway.

They were all from you. By you. For you. Through you. And we're here just to give it back. And we seek to experience the freedom that comes of letting go.

In surrendering. Knowing that it's not on us. That we can make mistakes. That there will be complaints. And there will be disappointments.

[59:38] But Lord, that you are sovereign. That you are building something. You are doing something. And you are making something beautiful.

Out of the broken vessels. That we have in this room. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.