

Sermon

Weapons of Our Warfare



Living as Salt and Light
By Derek Prince

This afternoon I'm going to continue in the theme that I have been bringing to you, the position and the responsibility of the Church, and I believe it would be good if we were to start again at Matthew 5:13. This time we're going to read it the way we've agreed to read it, placing the responsibility upon ourselves. We're not going to read it just as it is in the King James text, but we are going to say *we are*, instead of *ye are,* and *we are* instead of *it is.* Are you ready? When I raise my hand we'll start to read.

> "We are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? We are thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

I have pointed out to you that the church has a unique position in the world, unique responsibilities, that we as the church of Jesus Christ are the decisive factor in human affairs, that the destiny of men and nations and civilizations depends upon us. And I pointed out to you one great reason—not the only reason, but one great reason—is that because the destiny of men and nations is settled by unseen spiritual forces and we alone are able to intervene in that unseen spiritual realm and overcome those forces of evil in that realm and thus change the influences and the forces that are at work upon humanity and bring about a change for the better and for the glory of God in the affairs of the human race. And particularly I would point out to you that as Christians, whatever nation we live in, we are accountable to God for the political leadership and for the general condition of that nation.

And yesterday I pointed out to you that the basis of our power and authority to intervene effectively in this spiritual realm is in the fact that Jesus Christ, by His death on the cross, put to a final defeat and open shame all the forces of evil. He triumphed over principalities and powers making an open show of them in the cross. He did this as our representative, the last Adam, the one that represented the entire Adamic race, took upon Himself all our guilt, all our failure, all our condemnation, every heavy burden that sin had brought on the race, met our enemy face to face, defeated him, and rose as our representative and the Head

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of a new race to lead us forth in victory and in triumph. Colossians 2:15 tells us:

> "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Jesus Christ has triumphed over principalities and powers. The word *triumph* means actually: the public official celebration of a victory that has already been won. A triumph is not the same as a victory. The victory is the winning of the battle. The triumph is the celebration of the victory that has already been won. Christ has triumphed openly over principalities and powers. He has gone in open pageant of triumph drawing them behind them. You see, this reference actually is taken from the customs of the Roman Empire. And in the Roman Empire when a Roman general was outstandingly successful in a campaign, added new territories or conquered great enemies, the senate at Rome officially voted him a triumph, and the triumph consisted in this. That he was placed in a chariot drawn by a white horse and was led in parade through the streets of the city and the citizens of Rome lined the streets applauding him as he went past. Behind him were led in chains the evidences for his conquests. For instance, if he had been to a land where tigers were, and Rome was not used to tigers, tigers would be captured and led in pageant behind him as an evidence of his conquest. And then any kings or great military leaders whom he had defeated would be led in chains behind his chariot. And behind them would be rank after rank of captives taken prisoner in the war. And so these things that followed behind him were the public evidences of the victories he had won.

And so the picture is Jesus Christ in the chariot having defeated all our foes through the cross now leading them in public subjection and submission behind Him. This is the picture that the word *triumph* would conjure up for every reader in the days of the apostle Paul. It's the open, official, public celebration of a victory that has already been won. It's a demonstration of all the forces that have been defeated. Jesus led Satan and all his principalities and powers behind Him in open defeat and subjugation through the cross.

Now in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 14, you'll find this tremendous verse. Second Corinthians 2:14:

> "Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."

You notice that Christ has triumphed, but here the statement is that we are caused by God always to triumph in Christ, and the end of the verse says 'in every place.' Well, when you add together *always* and *in every place*, it doesn't leave anything out, does it? So we are *always* caused to triumph in Christ.

Very briefly the picture is not that we join the captives behind His chariot in chains. You know where we belong? In the chariot with Him. That's the place, by right, of every believer. Jesus invites us to share His triumph. One of the new translations says:

> "Now thanks be unto God who always makes us a constant pageant of triumph in Christ."

That's what we ought to be and that's what we have the right to be. We are the representatives of Jesus Christ. He won the victory. Now He has left it to you and me to apply the victory. You remember what He said in Matthew 28:18 and 19?

> "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and demonstrate it. Show the world the power that I've won by My death and resurrection."

And John 20:21, 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' You are the visible representatives of Me. You're in the world to demonstrate my victory, to apply My triumph, to show the world what I have achieved on their behalf.

Now, because we are in a spiritual warfare it is only logical that God has provided us with spiritual weapons. And in 2 Corinthians 10, verses 3, 4, and 5, we are told about these spiritual weapons. Second Corinthians 10, verses 3, 4, and 5:

> "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into

> captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

Notice that the opposing rebellious thoughts are brought into captivity behind the chariot. That's where they belong, but we belong in the chariot. All the spirit forces, all the forces in the spirit realm dominating men's minds and imaginations and reasonings and causing them to rebel against God are brought by us into captivity so that they follow us in chains behind the chariot. But in order to achieve this, the Scripture says, 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God.' God has given us spiritual weapons to achieve this result.

And for the remainder of my talks in this series I'm going to deal with what I consider to be some of the main spiritual weapons with which we are expected by God to achieve these results. And briefly, I will enumerate some of what I believe to be the main weapons. I do not suggest for a moment that this list is exhaustive, but the weapons that I have in mind—first of all, prayer; secondly, fasting; thirdly, praise; fourthly, testimony; fifthly,preaching, and if you want to go on, the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Now we will not be able to deal with all those, but in the messages that lie ahead I hope to deal with what I consider to be the ones that concern the majority of God's people most closely. And today I want to deal with the weapon of prayer.

Now, by way of introduction to the theme of prayer I would like to turn to Matthew the 18th chapter and read three verses in the center of the chapter. Matthew 18, verses 18, 19, and 20. These are the words of Jesus:

> "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them."

Let me point out that this is the great powerhouse of the world. In these verses is contained all the power that you need to get anything done that you ever want done. No president, no dictator, no army commander, no ordinary person outside the church has the smallest fraction of the power that's contained and offered to all Christians in these verses. 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound on earth shall be bound in heaven. Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. If ye shall ask any thing it shall be done for you.' What could you ask more than that? There is absolutely nothing—no situation, no problem, no enemy, no opposition—that is left outside of those promises. Everything you need to be totally effective and totally victorious is contained in those verses.

Now I want to offer you a few comments on them. First of all, I would like to give you the 'Prince version' of verse 20. I've explained this before. This is just my literal translation and it's not in print, so don't come up and ask for it. Somebody did once. Verse 20:

> "For where two or three have been led together into my name, there am I in the midst. I've changed that first phrase *have been led together*. You know what it says in Romans 8:14? For as many as are regularly led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

So we cannot leave out the Holy Spirit in any Christian activity. But 'where two or three people have been led together by the Holy Spirit,' that's where things are going to start to happen. Then, instead of *in my name* I want to translate it 'into My name.' This gives the correct impression that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the focal point around which His people meet. And in actual fact this is the only authorized meeting place for Christians in this dispensation. In the old dispensation, under the Law when God brought Israel into the Promised Land, He said, 'I will appoint one place, a house will be built there, I will place My name there, and that is the only place in the land where I will accept your sacrifices.' And we know, of course, that this place was Jerusalem, the house was the temple that Solomon built. And God said, 'You must not bring your sacrifices in any other place for I have put my name in that house.'

Exactly the same is true in this dispensation. There is only one authorized basis of meeting for Christians. We do not meet as Baptists or Presbyterians or Episcopalians. It is not authorized. There is only one center in which we are entitled to come together and that is into the name of Jesus. And where two or three have been led together by the Holy Spirit into the name of Jesus, then Jesus says, 'I'm in the

midst.'

Now then, the next thing that I want to point out to you is that in this eighteenth chapter of Matthew you have the second of the only two occasions on which Jesus in His discourses in the Gospels spoke about the church. The first one is Matthew 16, 'On this rock I will build my church,' and here in Mathew 18:

> "...tell it to the church: and if he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

And I offer you my opinion that in Matthew 16 Jesus is talking about the universal church, the true body of all believers of all races, all ages, all backgrounds, all denominations, and that will never meet in one place until it meets in the rapture. That's the first time that the whole church will ever come together, the universal church. It is impossible to convene the universal church at this time on earth. But in Matthew 18 Jesus is speaking about a church to which you can take your complaints and whose decisions you can listen to or refuse to accept. This is not the universal church. This is the local church. And basically, not completely, but basically the local church starts with verse 20: two or three who have been led together into the name of Jesus. This is the basis of the true local church of Jesus Christ: two or three led together into the name of Jesus.

Now the church is the body of Jesus Christ, and in the natural order I am not a doctor, not a medical doctor, and I've only, as a matter of fact, a Medical Orderly Class 2, if you really want to know. And so I'm speaking as a layman, but I believe that I'll stay to facts that are so simple that I won't be wrong. I understand that physical life, the life of the physical body of the human being is built up out of cells. And it's the multiplication of cells that produces the entire body. I further understand that when the cell life in a body is broken down, that is ill health and nothing else is a substitute for the healthiness of the individual cells. And I submit to you that exactly the same is true of the body of Jesus Christ, the church, and here in this verse we have the cell life of the church: two or three that have been led together into the name of Jesus. And if this cell life ceases to be healthy, no matter what else we may do on a larger scale,

no matter what programs we may have, no matter revivals we may have, no matter what conferences we may have, basically the body of Jesus Christ, the church, remains unhealthy as long as its cell life is not healthy. As long as we do not have this small individual cell life healthily functioning, the body of Jesus Christ as a whole cannot function healthfully any more than your body can possibly be healthy when the individual cell life has been broken down in your body.

As you know, cancer and various other diseases like that essentially consist in the breaking down of the cell life of the body. And ultimately if they are permitted to continue, they destroy the entire body. And I am convinced the same is true of the church. If the cell life, the life of the two or three, the individual close fellowship of people brought together in the name of Jesus is not healthy, then the body of the church as a whole cannot be healthy.

Now in considering these three central verses of Matthew 18, as I've said already, they are the source of power. All power that's ever needed for any need is contained in the promises of these three verses. But now I want you to notice something that they are surrounded by a great fence, and you cannot get into this secret central area of power except through the fence. And I'll tell you what the fence is —it's right relationships. If you are, do not maintain and live in right relationships with other people, you cannot get in here. This thing is fenced about with right relationships.

Before it Jesus says, 'If thy brother offend thee, go and speak to him.' Put it right. Don't leave offense, misunderstanding, undealt with. And at the close of this passage Jesus tells us the parable of the unforgiving servant who was forgiven ten thousand talents and would not forgive one hundred pence, and was delivered to the tormentors as a consequence. And the last verse of that parable says:

> "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye do not from your hearts forgive every one his brother his trespasses"

Unforgiveness, resentment, wrong attitudes and relationships exclude the Christian from this place. That's why multitudes of Christians know nothing of the power that's in this place, because they do not maintain right relationships with other people. And let me tell you this, you cannot be wrong with man

and right with God. It's impossible. If you are right with God you will be right with man. Let me give it to you very simple illustration. The cross has two beams—the vertical, the horizontal, and both are needed to make the complete cross, and this represents two relationships. The vertical is the relationship of man to God and the horizontal is the

relationship of man to man. And listen. If the horizontal beam is out of position, you do not need to look to know that the vertical beam is out of position. The same is true in the Christian life. If you are wrong with your fellow man, you cannot be right with God. And here's the great source of problem, the great leakage of power in the church is through wrong relationships. This little sacred secret area of all power is absolutely fenced in by God's demand, which He will not vary, that you maintain right relationships with everybody. And if you do not, you have not right of access here.

> "Now in the 19th verse this thought is brought out in another way:
> If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask..."

Now the word *agree* is Greek is the same word that gives us *a symphony.* 'If two of you shall symphonize on earth....' You see it's got nothing to do with mere intellectual agreement. 'Well, now we'll pray for Brother So-and-so in hospital.' This has nothing to do with it. This is an absolute travesty of what Jesus is saying. How many times do we not hear Christians say, 'Let's agree,' but they aren't in agreement. The word *symphony* indicates harmony, concord, the melting together of two spirits in unity, and when that happens, anything you ask will be done. You're irresistible, nothing can stand before you.

Now in the natural order—and again I don't need to tell you I'm no musician either. But if you have a symphony there are two things that are needed. I'm not saying there are only two, but one is a conductor and the other is a score. You can have all the ingredients of an orchestra, but if you don't have a conductor and a score there will be no symphony. You can get a group of people together and say, 'Well, let's be a choir,' but that doesn't make them a choir. And it's true spiritually. For true, spiritual symphony you've got to have the conductor and the score. The conductor is the Holy Spirit; the score is the will of God revealed by the Holy Spirit. And when two Christians, through the Holy Spirit come to harmony on the revealed will of God, whatever they ask will be done. There are no failures. It's guaranteed. You don't need more than two.

Now listen. Normally speaking, in the world as it is who would be the two most natural people to agree together in prayer? Husband and wife. Isn't that right? And how many husbands and wives really do agree together? I once was in a meeting and I said, 'How many husbands here find it easy to agree with their wives?' Perhaps I shouldn't have asked it. One man sheepishly put his hand up half way up. You see, as a matter of fact, the natural man doesn't find it easy to agree with anybody. Agreement is not possible for the old unregenerate, quarrelsome, self-assertive ego of man. It's only possible in the new man. There is one new man. When we get into the new man, then there is agreement. There are not a lot of new men. There is one new man. Agreement is impossible in the old realm. It's only possible in the new realm in Jesus Christ. I will tell you frankly that I believe there is no greater need in the church today than the agreement of husband and wife, father and mother. As I understand it, in every age and dispensation, from Adam and Eve to the close of the human history, there is one central focal unit in all human life, and it is the home. This does not vary. It's the same under the law, it's the same under grace. It's the same with the patriarchs, it's the same in the millennium. The central focal unit of all human life is the home, and when the home is broken down all human life ultimately is broken down. I do not believe that there can be any disputing that fact.

And I do not see a greater single problem in America today than the breakdown of home life. Having traveled as a speaker pretty widely, I've been interviewed from time to time by people who consult me as a Britisher and ask me what I think about the problems of the United States, and I'm usually careful to tell them, as a Britisher I'm not sure that it's my business to solve the problems of the United States. Then they will normally ask me, What do I think about the race question? and I never pose as an expert on this, although I'm prepared at times to offer an opinion. But I always end up by saying, 'However, the race question is not the most vital or serious issue of America today.' And then they will tell me, 'What is it?' And I'll say, 'The breakdown of home life, without any question, is the greatest single emergency that confronts the United States.' And where does it begin? It begins in the breakdown between husband and wife.

I'll tell you, if father and mother are not united, they'll never control their children. Children always know when there's disharmony between father and mother. And this is the source of all subsequent family problems—it's the breakdown of union between husband and wife. This is true in every realm. No matter from what point of view we consider the problem, it centers in this relationship. I don't know whether you're familiar with what the apostle Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 3 and verse 7. Here's a remarkable confirmation of this fact. First Peter chapter 3 and verse 7, speaking about the relationship between husbands and wives, this is what Peter says:

> "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them [the wives] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

Did you ever notice that? In other words, disharmony between husband and wife will hinder their prayers. This is just one example of the total principle that in order to get answers to prayer we must symphonize. We must be in harmony, we must be in concord, we must be in spiritual unity and when we reach that place of spiritual unity, everything we ask will be done. Believe me, it's worth being there.

Now let's be frank. I'm a husband myself. It is never easy for two people to live in real spiritual harmony. It requires attention. You've got to realize the value of it, and it's only through the work of the cross in each life that it will ever be achieved. But the rewards are the greatest, and frankly, dear friends, if husbands and wives that believe in Jesus Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, cannot live in harmony, I don't think they've got anything to export to the rest of the world. The rest of the world has enough of friction and frustration and division and disharmony already. If that's all you have, keep it to yourself. Don't export it.

Here is the test of whether what we have really works. I'll tell you, if it works in your home it will work anywhere, and if it doesn't work in your home don't try and make it work anywhere else. Now where one partner is an unbeliever, this is a different matter. And of course, husbands and wives are not the only two that can come together, but they're the most obvious two. And I have learned through experience—and my wife is in front of me right now—when we are in harmony we're irresistible. I feel sorry for the devil sometimes. I mean it, I mean it, and I pretty well know when we touch one another and God simultaneously that's settled. It shall be done. But I know from experience that the devil knows that too and he'll do everything he can to introduce some little seed of discord, some little frustration, some little friction. It doesn't have to be big, it doesn't have to be important, you can hide it from the neighbors, but you can't hide it from the Holy Spirit or the devil.

I'll tell you frankly that this is probably the greatest weakness of evangelical Christianity. I have a young friend, he's a fundamentalist, his father is a leading fundamentalist in the Chicago area, which is probably the leading fundamentalist area of the United States. And he told me one day, talking about these things, he said, 'I know personally about forty fundamentalist ministers.' And he said, 'I don't know one really happy home out of them all.' Do you think that's shocking? But you could believe it's true, couldn't you? Friend, you can be absolutely right in all your doctrines and totally wrong in all your relationships. Christianity is not primarily a religion of doctrine, it's a religion of relationships. This is what the Holy Spirit is trying by every means to emphasize. Let's get in harmony—we're irresistible.

Now I've dealt at length on this subject and I haven't given myself much time to conclude, but I want to bring this now into the realm of spiritual warfare. In 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 1, 2, 3 and 4, we read as follows: 1 Timothy chapter 2, verses 1, 2, 3 and 4:

> "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

This is the most wonderful presentation of logical truth, each thing developing out of the previous one. First of all, what is the basic need of a Christian church, for that is what Paul is dealing with in the epistles to Timothy. First of all, what? In one word I would say 'prayer.' There's many things — supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks— sum them up on one general word, the word would be *prayer, first of all prayer.*

All right. The next verse—what is the first item on God's prayer list for His people? Kings and all that are in authority. Before the sick, before anything else, we are exhorted by the Word of God to pray for kings and all that are in authority. And you know what? Basically with full gospel people they hardly ever do it at all—not once a month some of them. I've asked in many large congregations, 'How many of you people today have prayed for the president of the United States?' I've never had more than a twenty percent answer, never, and usually it's in the region of about two percent. Whom are you leaving to do it? Brother Prince from Britain, or are you expecting the communists to do it for you? Listen, if you don't pray for him and those in

authority, who do you think is going to do it? I sincerely believe that the Word of God means exactly what it says, that the first item on the normal Christian's prayer list every day should be those in authority. I believe it.

Then, what are we to pray for? It's given in the second half of verse 2, 'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.' This is the request that we are to make. Now, how would you sum up in a short phrase that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty? I'll tell you how I would sum it up: 'good government.' This really is a definition of what good government should ensure, 'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.'

Now friends, I'd like to ask you today about the United States. Are we leading a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty? No. Why not? Shall I tell you why? Because we haven't prayed. That's the reason. Shall I tell you what's happening in the United States today? You want to find it in the Word of God? You turn to Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 7, Isaiah 1:7. This is the message of God through the prophet Isaiah to the people of Israel in Isaiah's day.

> "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers."

That's not a bad description of the United States in 1968, is it? You know the remarkable thing about that, that God had to send a prophet to His people to tell them what was happening in front of their eyes. You would think that if people's land was being devoured right in front of their eyes and their cities being burned with fire, they would be conscious of what was going on. But He had to send a prophet to tell them. Do you know why? Do you know why they couldn't see what was happening in front of their eyes? Shall I tell you? They were too busy in church, and that's exactly the same with the modern American Christians. They're so busy in church they can't see what's happening.

You say, 'Well, Brother Prince, prove it.' Let me read to you what God says in the following verses. Verse 11:

> "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the LORD: [verse 12:] When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, [verse 13:] Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I can not away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth:"

Can you see what they were so busy with? Religion. While the world was burning outside the church, they were busy with their religion, their programs, their committees, their promotion schemes, their membership drives, and the world, and their nation sinking to ruin right in front of their eyes and they couldn't grasp the fact. And believe me as far as I'm concerned, that's an accurate portrait of modern America, and it's a just condemnation of the modern church. They're no better than the people in the temple in the days of Isaiah. Busy with a religion that has no real vital contact with reality and doesn't solve people's problems.

> "All right, we'll turn back to 1 Timothy chapter 2:
> We are to pray for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. We are to pray for good government. Verse 3, notice:
> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;"

What is *this*? Verse 2. What is verse 2? Good government. Good government *is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.* Just ask yourself this. Which does God approve, bad government or good government? Which is pleasing to God? Good government. Is that right? You're convinced of that. And furthermore the apostle Paul gives us the most practical reason why God approves good government. It's in the 4th verse because:

> "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

In other words, God wants all men to have an opportunity to hear the truth of the gospel in the most favorable circumstances and as a result of hearing it, to be saved.

Now listen, which promotes the work of preaching the gospel and reaching men for Christ better, good

government or bad government? What's the answer? Good government. Isn't that common sense? That's not difficult to see. Where there is violence, lawlessness, crime, repression, dishonesty, graft, does that help the work of the gospel? No, it hinders it. And because God wants all men to have the best opportunity to hear the truth, God favors good government. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. What is? Good government. What are we to do about it? To pray for it.

I tell many, many Christians, if you would spend the time you spend criticizing the government praying for it instead, you'd have much less to criticize. You're not slow to criticize. I tell you frankly, I think the president of the United States—and I'm not involved in the American politics because I'm a resident alien, I'm not even entitled to vote, I'm neither a Democrat nor a Republican—but let me tell you this, in my opinion the president of the United States today is doing his job better as a president than most Christians are doing their jobs as Christians. You've got little right to criticize him, because you're failing in your responsibility to him, and it's not a small responsibility, it's a great responsibility.

Now because good government is acceptable in the sight of God, when we pray what assurance does God give us? Would you turn with me to the first epistle of John the fifth chapter, verses 14 and 15. The first epistle of John the fifth chapter, verses 14 and 15:

> "And this is the confidence that we have in him [that is, in God], that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

Notice the word *confidence* in Greek a very strong word *complete confidence*. Not a questioning kind of faith, but *complete confidence* in God. And what is the nature of our confidence? Listen carefully.

> "That if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, we know that we have the petition [or the thing] that we asked for."

Is that clear? Now we know that good government is the will of God. So if we pray for good government, we know that God hears us, and if we know that God hears us, we know that we have the petition that we asked for which is good government. So either you can't rely on the Bible or the reason why we don't have good government is because we don't pray for it. Which do you think is the right explanation? Well I'll tell you I believe the right explanation is Christians get bad government because they deserve it. By and large I believe God's people get the kind of government they deserve. I believe that it's within the power of God's people to obtain for their nation good government. And if they don't you know what we are? We're salt that's lost its savour. We're not doing the job that we're here to do.

Now turn with me to 2 Chronicles chapter 7, verse 14. Second Chronicles chapter 7, verse 14. This is a promise from the Word of God. Now because this promise is taken from the Old Testament some of you might say it doesn't apply today. Keep you finger for a moment in 2 Chronicles 7:14, and turn with the other finger to 2 Corinthians 1:20. I introduce this verse simply to deal with this objection that the promises of the Old Testament do not apply to us as Christians. Would you notice what it says in 2 Corinthians 1:20?

> "For all the promises to God in him [that's Jesus Christ] are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us."

Who's us? You and me. To whom does it refer without any question whatever? It refers to all Christians. So all the promises of God in Jesus Christ—and how do we come to God? We come to God in Jesus Christ—*are*, not *were* in the past, *not will be* in the future, but are *now yea*, which means yes, and if you should still be tempted to doubt, and Amen, to the glory of God by apostles, by the early church, by the patriarchs—no, my friend, by us—you and me. You cannot get around that verse. It rules out all these

fancy dispensational theories which leave all the meat for some previous or future age and leave us nothing but the bone the gnaw in the present age. Thank God I don't believe it.

I have a friend who's the wife of a former deacon of the Moody Bible Church in Chicago, very good Christians. She became sick with an incurable condition of the kidney, went to the doctor, a Jewish specialist who was an atheist, and he told her there was no hope for her kidney. She went to the Moody book store to get a book on how to be healed. Now I've heard this from her own lips. She said, 'I came out with fourteen books on how to suffer, but not one on how to be healed.'

Well, you know what I believe. The gospel is good news, and if that's good news, I'd rather have bad news. You know what happened? These two good fundamentalists, died-in-the-wool fundamentalists, dotting every *i* and crossing every *t* of doctrine, you know what they did? They went to a high Episcopal Church in Wheaton, Illinois, and the Episcopal father, Father Winkler, anointed her with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus and God instantly healed her. Praise the Lord! Why didn't the fundamentalists know about anointing with oil? Isn't it in the epistle of James? Did it drop out? No, but they dispensationalized it away.

You know I was in Kenya talking to a fundamentalist missionary that had a great, sort of plaster cast around her neck. My wife and I said to her, 'What's the matter?' 'Well,' she said, 'I've got a slipped disc in my neck.' We said, 'Did you ever get anointed with oil for it?' She said, 'No.' 'Well,' I said, 'Why not?' 'Why,' she said, 'I didn't know that was for the church age.' 'Well,' I said, 'in what other age could you call for the elders of the church but the church age?'

See, friends, we've been cheated out of the best. We're living on skim milk when we're entitled to cream. But as for me and my house, we'll enjoy the cream. As far as I'm concerned, *all the promises of God in Christ are yea and Amen to the glory of God by me,* Derek Prince. Let me put it to you this way, every promise in the Bible that applies to my situation and meets my need is for me now. Shall I say that again? Every promise in the Bible that applies to my situation and meets my need is for me now, and if you want it, you can have it too.

Now having dealt with this dispensationalizing theory, let's get back to 2 Chronicles 7:14 for the few closing moments. God says:

> "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

God says if My people will do four things, I will do three things. Notice how His people are described: 'my people which are called by my name.' But you look in the Hebrew in the margin it's given literally: 'my people upon whom my name is called.' Why are you a Christian? Because the name of Christ is called upon you. This is the most exact description of Christians found anywhere in the Bible. And God says, 'If My Christian people will do four things, I will do three.'

What are the four things that God asks His people to do? Humble themselves, number one. Turn from their wicked ways—I beg your pardon—humble themselves, pray, seek His face, turn from their wicked ways. Then God says I will do what? Hear from heaven, forgive their sins, heal their land.

Now if the land of God's people is not healed, what is the reason? Has God failed to do what He promised or have God's people failed to meet His conditions? Which do you think is the correct explanation? I'll tell you what I believe. There's nothing wrong with God. He always does what He's promised. If our land is not healed it is because we have not met His four conditions. The first condition is to humble ourselves. Listen, don't ask God to make you humble. He can't do it. You have to humble yourself. No one else can make you humble. It's a decision that you make.

The next thing is pray. The next thing is seek God's face. Not pray for ten minutes on Saturday evening, but pray till you get into the presence of Almighty God and you know you've touched God. And fourthly turn from their wicked ways. 'Brother Prince, did I hear you aright?' You did. It's not the prostitute, it's not the beatnik, it's not the dope addict that holds back the hand of God. It's the wickedness in the church. You say, 'Brother Prince, I didn't hear you right. I've got no wickedness. What do you think I do?' Dear brother or sister, I'll tell you the probable problem is not what you do, but what you don't do. James 4:17:

> "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

In Matthew 25 there are three groups of people banished forever from the presence of the Lord at His return: the foolish virgins, the unfaithful steward and the goat nations. And to the goat nations it was said, 'Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire.' And you pause and ask yourself, What did these groups of people do that caused them to be banished forever from the presence of the Lord? And I'll answer you in one word, 'Nothing.' That's all. The foolish virgins didn't take any oil, the unfaithful steward did nothing with his talent, and the goat nations Jesus said, 'Inasmuch as he did it not.' That's all. Do you know that you can be lost and damned forever for doing nothing?

Now perhaps you understand what God means. Do you know what Samuel said to Saul and the children of Israel? He said, 'God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.' Do you realize that ceasing to pray is a sin?

We've come to the end of our message and I want to say this. If our land is not healed, the fault lies with the church. We have not met God's conditions. It is not God that has changed or failed to keep His promise. And if we do not change and meet God's conditions so that God in turn can heal our land, then our designation is salt that has lost its savour, and we are thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men, and you can be sure it will happen.

Now I do not believe it needs to happen. I believe the alternative is that the church repents. Now, in my next message I'm going, at least in part, to give you some personal examples of prayer that has changed the course of history prayed by Brother Prince. It would be idle for me to stand up and present these truths to you if I could not back them home by experience, so I'm going to take a part of my next message to detail about five or six instances in which I and sometimes others with me prayed and changed the course of history. And I'm going to give you the most exact and detailed account. Now let's stand to our feet and close in prayer.

Father, we come to thee now in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And first of all we confess our sins like Daniel, and the sins of our people, that we have failed Thee, Lord, and we have failed our people, and

we are sorry and we ask Thee to forgive us and we pray that Thou will help us to repent and so to change our ways that the very situation and the nation in which we live may be changed and our land may be healed, In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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Sermon

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