

International Women's Day of Prayer

March 7, 2020

Virtuous Living in an Un-virtuous World

[And the Call to Take Up Our Cross]

Includes afternoon seminar

The Heart Where God Delights to Dwell

[The Beauty of Brokenness and Humility]

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Seventh-day Adventist® Church

GENERAL CONFERENCE
WORLD HEADQUARTERS



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES



October 28, 2019

Dear Sisters,

Joyful greetings to you. Once again Women's Ministries (WM) International Day of Prayer is here. As you prepare for this day, plan to spend more time in prayer the week before and the week after this day. Prayer is a vital part of our daily relationship with Jesus. Prayer brings us close to God's throne. Prayer strengthens us. In prayer we can tell God all our concerns, even things we would not tell any other person on earth. The Holy Spirit takes our prayers and presents them before the Father in words that truly express our heart.

This Day of Prayer we are calling you to "...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people" (Ephesians 6:18, NIV). We all pray for our families and friends, but this Day of Prayer spend time praying for those we do not know – government leaders (call them by name), church leaders in our fields, the homeless, widows, suffering children everywhere, those being persecuted for their faith, the lonely, the abused... The list goes on. Add as you see best. Maybe you can add one group listed to your prayers each day. Please for those who are nameless and faceless to you but whom God is also calling to His fold.

Our sermon for this Day of Prayer focuses on virtuous living. It doesn't matter our circumstances or influences that surround us, we are called to live according to the righteous standard Jesus set for us. In the truest sense of the word, living virtuously is living like Jesus. This does not happen without diligent prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is evidence that a virtuous heart is being formed into the image of Jesus.

Our prayer is that this message and the entire packet of resources will encourage you to make prayer a daily part of your discipleship process, becoming more and more like Jesus.

Blessings and joy to you,

Sincerely,



Heather-Dawn Small, director

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Prayer Focus

In our programs today, we will be charged to virtuous living in an un-virtuous world, taught to pray using the twelve keys to unlocking heaven's storehouse of power, and called upon to lay aside pride in order pick up humility. Ellen G. White, a woman of pray and faith, gives us this encouragement:

"He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. If the conditions are met, the promise [of answered prayer] is unequivocal" (*Prayer*, p. 101).

"Pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 30).

"The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 149).

Our focus this year is praying for deeper humility, stronger faith, and Christ-like virtuous living.

- Pray for yourself and your witness!
- Pray for your marriages and your children
- Pray for your family and loved ones
- Pray for your fellow church members
- Pray for your pastor and church leaders
- Pray for your government leaders

Pray for each of our world divisions, the women, and the women's ministry leaders.

- East-Central Africa Division
- Euro-Asia Division
- Inter-American Division
- Inter-European Division
- North American Division
- Northern Asia-Pacific Division
- South American Division
- South Pacific Division
- Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division
- Southern Asia Division
- Southern Asia-Pacific Division
- Trans-European Division
- West-Central Africa Division

About the Author

Sermon: **Virtuous Living in an Un-virtuous World**

Melody Mason (also known as Melodious Echo) is passionate about Jesus and about helping people develop a vibrant walk with Him. She is author of the best-selling book *Daring to Ask for More: Divine Keys to Answered Prayer*, which is already available in 10 languages. Much of the material in this International Women's Ministries Day of Prayer series was taken from her new soon-to-be-released book *Daring to Live by Every Word: Divine Keys to Abundant Living*.

Melody currently coordinates the *United in Prayer* initiative for the General Conference and helps with resource development for the Revival and Reformation initiatives for the world church. Melody has been featured on multiple programs on Hope Channel as well as 3ABN, and her testimony and seminars can be found throughout YouTube. Melody loves to write, hike, bike, spend time in nature, and whenever possible, volunteers her time in overseas missions. She lives in Silver Spring Maryland.

[Bible verses in the sermon are quoted from NKJV.](#)

Seminar: **The Heart where God Delights to Dwell**

As we pray for revival and prepare for heaven, what type of heart should we cultivate? Isaiah 57:15 gives us the answer. "For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' "

In the afternoon workshop, Melody again points our eyes toward Scripture as she gives us a closer look at the kind of heart where God delights to dwell. It is the heart of humility, the heart of brokenness, and the heart of praise that truly brings God the highest honor.

[Bible verses in the seminar are quoted from NKJV.](#)

Program Notes

Please feel free to translate, adjust, and edit the resource packet *according to your division's needs*, including the best Bible version for your use. Also, you are free to adapt the packet *according to your cultural audience*. When your division has translated the assigned packet for French, Portuguese, and Spanish, please send us a digital file to share with our sisters who need it.

Outline of Divine Service

Suggested Order of Service

Call to worship

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3, 4 (KJV)

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to **glory and virtue**:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Hymn of praise: 516, “All the Way,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Pastoral prayer

Call for the offering

Responsive reading: 787, “Christianity in Practice,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Children’s Story: “How Little Larisa Learned to Fast and Pray”

Special music

Sermon: “Virtuous Living in an Un-virtuous World”

Hymn of response: 316, “Live Out Thy Life Within Me,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Closing Prayer

Children's Story

How Little Larisa Learned to Fast and Pray

Children's Story

From Adventist Mission

How many of you have ever skipped a meal? Have you ever skipped two meals? It's hard to skip eating food when you get hungry, isn't it?

Sometimes people skip a meal, so they can take extra time to pray. When they do this, we call it "fasting."

Did you know that God tells us that sometimes we need to take a fast—that means we need to skip eating food or stop doing a certain activity for a little bit, so that we can spend extra time in prayer about something really important.

This morning I want to tell you about a little girl named Larisa, from the Czech Republic, who learned how to fast and pray.

Larisa's Father and Mother fasted whenever something very important worried them.

If her Father had a big problem at work in Prague, he and Mother might not eat any food for a whole day. Instead, they might only drink water while they prayed to God about the work problem.

If Grandfather faced a major hardship, Father and Mother might not eat any dessert for a day. Instead they might only eat fruits and vegetables while they prayed to God about Grandfather's hardship.

One evening, Larisa's Father announced during family worship with Mother and their three children that a beloved aunt wanted to get a divorce. He and Mother decided that they would go on a fast from all food the next day.

At this point 13-year-old Larisa spoke up.

"I want to fast and pray, too," she said.

Father slowly shook his head.

“Mother and I have told you many times that you are too young to go a whole day without any food,” he said.

“But Father,” Larisa pleaded. “I’m already 13. I’m not 9 or 5 years old like my brothers. I really want to fast and pray for Aunt.”

Father and Mother were not sure about the request, but Larisa kept pleading.

Mother suggested that Larisa go on a no-dessert fast and only eat fruits and vegetables. But Larisa insisted that she wanted to try a no-food fast. Finally Father gave his consent, and Larisa happily went to bed. It was the weekend.

In the morning, Larisa remembered when she woke up that she planned not to eat anything all day. Instead, she would drink water and pray from time to time that Aunt change her mind about getting a divorce.

“Please, save her family, Lord, because I know nothing is impossible for You to do, and I know You can help her,” she prayed.

She got up and immediately drank a glass of water.

The family had morning worship together and prayed for Aunt.

Then as Larisa’s brothers ran to the kitchen for breakfast, she went to her bedroom and closed the door so she wouldn’t see them eating. She read the Bible some more and prayed for Aunt not to get a divorce. Hearing her brothers still eating, she pulled out a paintbrush and paint, a painted a picture of tall green trees and grand purple mountains.

After breakfast, Larisa played with her brothers in the living room. From time to time, she prayed silently for Aunt.

“Please, save her family, Lord, because I know nothing is impossible for You to do, and I know You can help her,” she prayed.

At lunchtime, Mother asked how she felt.

“I’m fine. I’m fine,” Larisa said. “I’ve got this. Don’t worry.”

After drinking a glass of water, she returned to her bedroom. She was starting to feel hungry, and she didn’t want to be tempted to break her fast. In her room, she searched the Internet for information about England. She liked everything about England, and she wished that she could visit one day.

After lunch, Larisa played some more with her brothers, but she was beginning to feel very hungry. It wasn't as easy as she had expected to fast.

"I'm really hungry, but I don't want to give up," Larisa told Father.

"You can do it," Father said, encouragingly.

Larisa prayed silently for Aunt not to get a divorce and asked God to help her continue the fast. Then she poured herself another glass of water.

After a while, Mother suggested that Larisa also drink some hot water.

"You can start to feel cold when you don't eat," Mother said.

The hot water warmed up Larisa, and she tried hard not to think about food. She prayed for Aunt.

At suppertime, Larisa went back to her room. She folded some clothes, dusted her desk, and put things back in their right place.

At evening worship, the family prayed for Aunt and talked about the day.

"What did you enjoy today?" Father asked Larisa.

"I'm happy that I'm still alive!" Larisa said.

The next morning, Larisa heartily ate a salad of cucumbers, carrots, and lettuce for breakfast. The food tasted better than ever before.

A few days later, Father announced during family worship that Aunt had changed her mind. She no longer wanted to get a divorce.

Larisa was so happy that she had fasted and that God had answered her prayers.

Is there something very special that you would like God to do in your life today?

Maybe like Larisa, you should take some time to fast and pray.

Perhaps you don't want to skip a whole day of eating, but did you know there are many other ways to fast.

What are some things that you think you might could give up for one day, or even for a few hours, while you pray for God to work a special miracle? **[Take suggestions from the children.]**

Perhaps you could fast from cookies, cake, ice cream, and other desserts and only eat fruits and vegetables.

Or you could stay off the Internet and Facebook for a day.

Or you could decide not to watch any movies for a day.

Remember, when we fast, it's not because we think we can earn God's blessings. As one person has said, "We fast from the world so we can feast on Jesus."

If you take time to fast, make sure you take extra time to pray and spend with Jesus. God always hears our prayers when we pray. And He especially loves to hear children pray!

—End of Children's Story—

Sermon

Virtuous Living in an Un-virtuous World

[And the Call to Take Up Our Cross]

By Melody Mason

(Intro Slide 1 → SLIDE 2)

Introduction

In 1994, the country of Rwanda experienced a horrifying genocide which left more than a million people dead. About 100,000 of these were Seventh-day Adventist Church members.

During the heat of the conflict, one tribe was seeking to exterminate the other tribe. The tribe being attacked rushed to the churches for safety thinking that they would not be killed while taking sanctuary in a church. In one of these churches, a group of Adventists huddled together.

The doors were locked, and everyone clung to each other, praying for safety. Soon the mob, armed with machetes, broke through the doors, killing everyone in their path, even the pastor. It was a horrible massacre. Only a few escaped.

A couple days later, after the killers moved on, those who had survived came to collect the dead bodies to bury them in a mass grave. When picking up the bodies, they found one woman's heart was still beating. They rushed her to the hospital hoping to save her life. Her fight for life was very intense, but she survived. For the next three years she was in and out of the hospital. Finally, she began to rebuild a new life.

As the wife of the Seventh-day Adventist pastor, who had been killed in the massacre, sister Marie decided that she did not want her husband's death to be in vain. She also decided that she would not live in bitterness and hatred but instead offer forgiveness to those who had hurt her so deeply.

(SLIDE 3) – Marie's Testimony

Practicing Forgiveness

MARIE'S TESTIMONY

Marie¹ read in the book of Romans, "Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." (Romans 12:20).

¹ Marie is not her real name nor is this her real picture.

Discovering that some of the killers had been captured and were in a nearby prison, Sister Marie went to see them and take them food. As time passed, she became the “mother” figure of that prison, regularly bringing the prisoners food and blankets. She also began studying the Bible with the prisoners.

One day while ministering to the prisoners, a young man named Rukundo came and fell at her feet and began kissing her feet. “Madam, do you remember me?” he asked. Sister Marie swallowed hard as she recognized his face. It was the man who had killed her husband. He had also tried to kill her as well.

“Madam, would you forgive me? He asked with tears in his eyes.

Gently she pulled the young man up from the floor and hugged him. “I have already forgiven you a long time ago. I have decided in my heart that I will not hate. I will not waste my years with bitterness or grudges. I have forgiven you.”

For the next six months Sister Marie studied the Bible with Rukundo. As a result, Rukundo made the decision to be baptized. On the day of his baptism he stood up in front of the whole prison and confessed his sins. It was beautiful and moving. Marie was there to witness it.

After a few years, the government of Rwanda gave Rukundo amnesty, and he was released from prison. However, Rukundo’s family, including his father and mother, had also been killed in the genocide, and he had nowhere to go. Walking to Marie’s home after his release, he knocked on her door. “I’m alone and don’t know where to go. What should I do?” he asked. She smiled. “I’m alone too! I will adopt you as my son, and we will wait for Jesus to come. Then together we will meet our loved ones.”²

(SLIDE 4 – quote)

In the book *Christ Object Lessons*, we read, “The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.”³

Perhaps Marie’s actions seem like an extreme example of modeling the love of Jesus, however, I believe this is *just the kind of Christianity* that God is calling each of us to embrace. It’s unthinkable! It’s radical! It’s supernatural! And it’s humanly impossible, except for the person who is filled with the Holy Spirit.

² Based on the testimony shared by Mark Finley at https://youtu.be/8nAflne_jUM. Names have been changed to protect privacy.

³ *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 415

(SLIDE 5 – verse)

Our Scripture reading this morning is 2 Peter 1:3-4. Let's look at it again.

“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us to **glory and virtue**, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

What does it mean to be called to glory and virtue? I believe it means to live virtuously in an un-virtuous world. It means to show by the way we live our life what God's love has done in our own heart.

(SLIDE 6 – Jesus serving)

The Upside-Down Model for Christian Living

JESUS' DISCIPLESHIP MODEL

We discover from the Gospels that Jesus gives His followers a discipleship model that is upside down to how society would encourage us to live. His model is backwards to the typical worldly rules for success.

Let me share some examples:

- **The world says** if you want success, always strive to be first.
- **Jesus says** in My kingdom the first shall be last. (See Matthew 20:16)

- **The world says** take care of yourself and your own needs.
- **Jesus says** it's all about taking care of the needs of others. (See Matthew 20:28)

- **The world says** seek to pamper yourself and live life to the fullest.
- **Jesus says**, it's time to die to self and selfish pleasures and live for others. (See Matthew 16:24).

- **The world says** do good so everyone can see you and so you can be rewarded.
- **Jesus says** if our motive is to be seen by men, we will have no reward in heaven. In fact, He says that what we do in secret and without attempting to gain attention is really what counts most. (See Matthew 6:1, 6)

- **The world says** make friends with the rich and famous so you can gain an advantage.
- **Jesus says** learn what it means to serve the least of these, for these are the greatest in my kingdom. (See Matthew 25:45)

- **The world says** lay up your treasures now, focus on getting as much as you can now.
- **But Jesus says**, the temporal treasures you lay up now will rust and be destroyed. The only treasures that last are those you give away. (See Matthew 6:19, 20)

If we think these principles are difficult, this next command is truly extreme. True Christianity is put on grand display for the glory of God.

- **The world says**, “eye for eye and tooth for tooth” and “love your neighbor but hate your enemies.”
- **But Jesus says** love your enemies. If you are slapped, turn the other cheek. (See Matthew 5:38-44)

Let’s look at this command more closely as recorded in the gospel of Luke.

Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful (Luke 6:28-36).

(SLIDE 7 - hug)

Just imagine how soon the work would be finished and Jesus would come to take us home, if we modeled the love of Christ like this. Jesus says, “By this all shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

However, we don’t naturally live and love this way. And it’s hard to talk about loving our enemies like this when we cannot even love *our friends and fellow church members* this way. We need the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, for apart from Christ, we can do nothing.

(SLIDE 8 – Love Himself)

We pray for more peace and joy, but we should pray for the God of peace and joy to dwell in us through His Spirit (John 14:27, John 15:11). We pray to be more loving, but we should pray for that Love Himself will us (John 15:10). We pray to become better Christians, but we should pray for Christ Himself to live in us through the Holy Spirit—as He intended (Ephesians 2:22).

(SLIDE 9 – Tom’s testimony)

Turning the Other Cheek

TOM’S TESTIMONY

Let me share another story. It’s about a man named Tom.⁴

Tom was a Bible worker serving in a difficult region of the world where sharing the gospel is not always easy and many Christians are persecuted for their faith.

As the story goes, Tom and his wife had been in a motorcycle accident. The accident had occurred as they had been stopped beside the road when another cyclist came along and hit them. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured, even though both motorcycles were damaged. The man who hit them was drunk. He was also the chief of a nearby village.

Although Tom didn’t have much money, instead of getting angry over the accident, he asked the chief, “How shall we solve this problem?”

“You need to fix my motorcycle!” the chief rudely responded.

Without argument, Tom paid for the motorcycle repairs. But he didn’t stop there. In addition, he went to visit the chief and started looking for ways to help him and his family, even offering to go out and plow his field. Tom did so many nice things for this chief and his family that people in that village could not help but take notice.

“Our chief is a very rude man!” someone told Tom one day. “Why are you being so kind to him? No one ever manages to be friends with our chief!”

“Because I love Jesus and I want to share His love with others,” Tom responded.

Soon after, some of the villagers asked Tom if he would teach them more about Jesus. It was not long before Tom began Bible studies with a number of the villagers, and some were even baptized. The amazing miracle is that this village was in an area that Tom had tried to enter previously to share the gospel. But his efforts had always been unsuccessful. Now, through his kindness to the chief, God had made a breakthrough.

Just think—if Tom had reacted to the accident the way most people do, he never would have been able to reach this village for Christ. Can you imagine how different things might be in our world and even in our church today, if we went the extra mile and served each other with such selfless humility, even when we’ve been wronged?

⁴ Tom is not his real name nor is this his real picture.

(SLIDE 10 – quote)

In *Ministry of Healing* we read,

“We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy that we most need to fear...No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self. We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls.”⁵

(SLIDE 11 – quote)

Remember,

“The Lord can do more in one hour than we can do in a whole lifetime, and when He sees that His people are fully consecrated, let me tell you, a great work will be done in a short time, and the message of truth [will] be carried into the dark places of the earth, where it has never been proclaimed.”⁶

(SLIDE 12 – baby)

Virtuous Living in an Un-virtuous World⁷

According to the Scriptures, each one of us has been commissioned, set apart, and empowered for a holy purpose—to share the love of God with a dying world. In order to do this, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit and live a life both inside and out, that is virtuous, honorable, and consistent with our holy calling. It doesn’t matter how we are treated. It doesn’t matter the influences that surround us. We are called to be faithful, “without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom [we] shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:15).

(SLIDE 13 – quote)

“It is the glory of God to give His virtue to His children,”⁸ writes Ellen White.

What exactly does this kind of virtuous life look like? Well, it looks like Jesus! Jesus was the fruit of the Spirit in person!

We read in Galatians 5:22, 23 that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

You see, if the Spirit of God dwells within us, Holy Spirit fruit will come out. Not just one fruit, but *all the fruit!*

⁵ *Ministry of Healing*, p. 485

⁶ *5th Manuscript Releases*, p. 347.3

⁷ Inspiration for the title of this message comes from Frank M. Hasel, author of *Longing for God*.

⁸ *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 530

Jesus showed through His example how to live and love virtuously in an un-virtuous world.

(SLIDE 14 – quote)

Ellen G. White writes,

The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised.⁹

This should be our daily prayer! When God has offered so much, why do we settle for less?

Remember, this is not a battle for stronger will power or greater self-control. It's actually a heart battle. To whom have we surrendered our heart?

(SLIDE 15 – heart)

Unfortunately, the world has taught us that our life is all about looking out for the big number #1 – me, self! Whatever makes me most fulfilled and happy is right for me, people say. But according to the Scripture this is dangerous thinking!

What our hearts want isn't always righteous or right thinking. "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" cries Jeremiah (17:9). We never find safety when looking to self and following our heart!

We need to continually be praying, *"Lord, take my heart! Change my heart! Make me like You."*

(SLIDE 16 – cross)

"The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought [or ever will be fought]. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness."¹⁰

(SLIDE 17 – verse)

The Call to Take Up Our Cross

In Luke 9:23, 24 the Bible tells us, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

⁹ *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 149

¹⁰ *Steps to Christ*, p. 43

Now at first glance, this taking up the cross business might seem rather unattractive. However, contrary to popular thinking, the sweet reality is that when we take up our cross, it actually frees God's hands to remove those roadblocks in our life that are hindering us in our heavenward journey. So, what the world might consider a painful sacrifice is really our heavenly gain.

(SLIDE 18 – quote)

We are never called upon to make a real sacrifice for God. Many things He asks us to yield to Him, but in doing this we are but giving up that which hinders us in the heavenward way. Even when called upon to surrender those things which in themselves are good, we may be sure that God is thus working out for us some higher good.¹¹

Perhaps you are struggling with a secret sin or spiritual stronghold in your life that you just can't seem to get the victory over. A wise person has said, "The key isn't how committed you are to the battle—it's how surrendered you are to God."

(SLIDE 19 – white flag)

Let us remember that for the believer waving the white flag of surrender does not mean, "I'm a loser in this battle!" It actually means, "Victory at last, in Jesus!"¹²

When we give ourselves to Jesus and take up His cross, something amazing happens. Rather than the cross being a burden, we discover that "As we lift this cross... [the cross in actuality] lifts us."¹³ We must surrender our perceived strength to Jesus and allow His strength to carry the burden of the cross. Our own strength is helplessness and brokenness. The instant we surrender our brokenness to Jesus, He gives us victory.

(SLIDE 20 – quote)

"When you surrender yourself entirely to God, when you fall all broken upon Jesus, you will be rewarded by a victory the joy which you have never yet realized."¹⁴

Ellen White paints a picture: "When you fall all broken upon Jesus..." When we fall on Jesus, what does the brokenness mean?

(SLIDE 21 – Priceless dust)

Priceless Dust

Brokenness is truly the most beautiful offering and sacred sacrifice we can give to God. Indeed, it is the only sacrifice we have to give. The Bible tells us, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

¹¹ *Ministry of Healing*, p. 473

¹² We thank Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth for this inspiration, from the back cover of her book *Brokenness*.

¹³ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 45

¹⁴ *Gospel Workers*, p. 373

The meaning of the word “contrite” in Psalm 51:17 comes from the Hebrew word *dâkâh*, which means: *to crumble, to beat in pieces, to break, to crush to powder, to dust, to utterly destroy.*

Think about it! If something is simply broken, you might be able to glue it back together, but you can’t glue dust back together. And that’s what we are in reality—dust...broken...crushed vessels!

“What an exalted privilege!” Ellen White writes, “Finite beings, of dust and ashes, admitted through the mediation of Christ, into the audience chamber of the Most High.”¹⁵

And to think, not only do we have audience with God, but dust is the very ingredient that God uses again and again to work His best miracles.

In the beginning, God planted the trees and plants in the Garden of Eden in dust and caused them to grow and produce fruit (Genesis 1:11). Then God formed man and woman, His crowning work of creation, out of dust and commanded them to be fruitful, to produce fruit (Genesis 2:7; 1:28).

Pause for a second here. Do we recognize that all our best fruit and labors, all our best works, apart from the breath of life, the blood of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit, are nothing more than dust? And yet, oftentimes we are so arrogant that we glory *in our dust!*

Thankfully, even after the curse of sin fell upon the world, Jesus still cared about the dust. He returned to earth to continue His work among the dust of humanity (1 Samuel 2:8). While He used dust to restore the blind man’s sight (John 9:5-6), it is the dust and brokenness of life that He often uses today to restore our spiritual sight. He is good at mixing water with dust to make clay. And it is by being moldable clay (mud) in the hands of the Master Potter that we become all that He’s created us to be (Jeremiah 18:6).

(SLIDE 22 – quote)

As one author so eloquently writes, “Dust doesn’t have to signify the end. Dust is often what must be present for the new [life] to begin.”¹⁶

Yes, dust truly can become beautiful if it is in the hands of a loving God. And surrendered dust is priceless! In fact, we are told,

There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church.... The latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is

¹⁵ *Child Guidance*, p. 468.

¹⁶ Lysa Terkeurst, *It’s Not Supposed to Be This Way*, p. 18.

purified from every defilement.¹⁷

Have you surrendered your dust to Jesus? Have you surrendered your failures, your sins, and your wounded broken parts to Jesus? If we only surrender it all to Him, He can work miracles with dust.

(SLIDE 23 – Jesus: Give Me Your Dust)

Appeal

Today, friends, Jesus holds out His nail-scarred hand and says, “Give Me your dust.” What a glorious invitation! Let’s give Him our dust—the dust of genuine brokenness from a heart in need, a heart that says, “Yes, Lord! I want a deeper walk with You. I want to be changed into Your image, so I can love others with the same love You’ve given me. I want to be the virtuous Christian you’ve called me to be. But all I have to offer You is broken and flawed. So I give you my failures, my pain, my heartache, and my tears. Even my best efforts are merely dust, but I’m willing to give all my *dust* to You, and to become clay in the hands of the Master Potter. You can have the throne of my heart, Lord! Whatever You say, I’m yours.”

If this prayer is your desire today, would you stand with me, as we have the closing prayer?

—End of Sabbath sermon—

Announcement: Join us this afternoon for the inspiring workshop “The Heart Where God Delights to Dwell.”

¹⁷ *Last Day Events*, p. 192-193

Sabbath School Program

Unlocking Heaven's Storehouse of Power [Twelve Biblical Keys of Intercession]

By Melody Mason

Suggested Program

Opening Hymn: 310 – “I Would Draw Nearer to Jesus,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Opening Prayer

Welcome

Introduction

Special Music

Scripture: James 5:16 (NKJV)

“Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

Program: “Unlocking Heaven's Storehouse of Power”

Testimony of Answered Prayer: Optional

Closing Hymn: 195 – “Showers of Blessing,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Closing Prayer

The International Women's Day of Prayer

In 1990 the Department of Women's Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists instituted the International Women's Day of Prayer. This is a special day which takes place on the first Sabbath in March where women throughout the world are united in prayer.

Sabbath School Program

Shorten or lengthen with additional testimonies, as needed!

Unlocking Heaven's Storehouse of Power

[Twelve Biblical Keys of Intercession]

By Melody Mason

Do you ever feel like you pray and pray and pray and yet still no answer comes? In fact, the more you pray, the worse things seem to be getting. [Share a personal story or illustration!]

Much as God loves us and wants to answer our prayers, exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, there are conditions that we must meet in order to receive His full blessing.

In the book *Christ Object Lessons*, we read,

There are conditions to the fulfillment of God's promises, and prayer can never take the place of duty....Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not those things that would show faith in Christ and love for Him.¹⁸

What are God's conditions? "He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. If the conditions are met, the promise [of answered prayer] is unequivocal."¹⁹

When we read the Bible, we soon find a consistent pattern. God is after souls. He is after the glory of His name. He is after the establishment and building up of His Kingdom. He is love. These are the natural expressions of His will. When we are praying according to His will and for His glory—that His Kingdom may be established—we can pray boldly with confidence, even in the face of human impossibilities, for John encourages us, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14).

The Key to Unlocking Heaven's Storehouse

The WAY we pray is the key to unlocking heaven's storehouse. Here are twelve keys for how our prayers should be expressed. Pray from genuine need, with heart sincerity, according to God's will, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in faith, in obedience and repentance, with forgiveness, with honor, out of honest stewardship, with generosity, to know the Giver, and with enduring persistence. Let's look at the twelve keys one at a time.

Key 1: FROM GENUINE NEED.

¹⁸ *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 143

¹⁹ *Prayer*, p. 105

We must pray out of genuine need. Do you recognize your need of God and the help that only He can give?

There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. He has promised, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Isaiah 44:3. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled.²⁰

God doesn't waste time trying to fill people that are already full of themselves. He's looking for empty vessels.

Key 2: WITH SINCERITY.

We must be sincere in prayer. Ellen White discloses,

Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection.²¹

Without one stammering word! Isn't that beautiful?

Key 3: IN GOD'S WILL.

We must pray according to God's will. "How do I know the will of God?" you ask. To really understand the will of God, we need to know the Word of God. If we know the Word, we will have a clearer picture of His will.

Anything that is in alignment with His nature is in accordance with His will. We don't need to wonder if God wants to give us freedom from sin, power over the enemy, perfect peace, exceeding joy, strength for ministry, healthy marriages, and fruitfulness for His Kingdom. These are things He makes very clear in Scripture that He delights to give.²²

When we know our prayers align with the Kingdom mission of Scripture, we can pray boldly. If we aren't sure what is God's will, then we can pray boldly for wisdom claiming James 1:5.

Key 4: BY INSPIRATION OF HOLY SPIRIT.

²⁰ *Prayer*, p. 101

²¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 667

²² Leslie Ludy, *Wrestling Prayer*, p. 179

We must pray by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes our prayer agenda is not always God's prayer agenda. As we pray, rather than just going down our list of wants, we need to start asking God what He wants us to pray about as we dig deeper into God's Word.

The LORD urges us to "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3).

Ellen White reveals, "If we will draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh to us, and His glory will go before us. He will indite our petitions, teaching us to ask for the very things that He has pledged Himself to bestow on us."²³

Key 5: IN FAITH.

We must pray in faith. Do we take God by faith at His word? James 1:6 charges, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

In *Steps to Christ* we read, "Prayer is the key in the hand to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured boundless resources of Omnipotence."²⁴

Key 6: IN OBEDIENCE AND REPENTANCE.

We must pray from a lifestyle of obedience and repentance. This means, as we ask for God to answer our prayers, we are also seeking to obey Him to the best of our ability, and to put away any known sin—not because our obedience makes us worthy of His blessings, but because our obedience is evidence of our love.

The psalmist writes in Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity [sin] in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

That's why we are reminded, "If we render to Him only a partial, halfhearted obedience, His promises will not be fulfilled to us."²⁵

When Saul is called to be the first King of Israel, he has a humble teachable spirit. He is pliable and moldable as a servant of God and does whatever God asks him to do. As a result, God blesses him. However, as he gains popularity and experience, his pride grows. He begins making his own decisions and doing things his way.

When asked by God to wipe out the Amalakites, Saul is selective in his obedience. He chooses to kill some, but he saves others alive, justifying his excuse with godly sounding motives. The next thing we hear about Saul is when he needs God's counsel about a battle with the

²³ *General Conference Bulletin*, April 2, 1903, art. A, par. 6, "How to Receive God's Blessing"

²⁴ *Steps to Christ*, p. 94

²⁵ *Ministry of Healing*, p. 227

Philistines. But God has already stopped answering Saul's prayers because of his disobedience and excuses. With nowhere else to turn, Saul consults a witch. Unfortunately, the Philistines win the battle against Israel. Saul not only loses his kingdom and his life; Saul loses his soul (see 1 Samuel 28:15-28; 31:1-13).

Prayer is of no avail if the life does not match the prayer. Ellen White cautions us, "We must live in harmony with our prayers."²⁶ It's no wonder there is seen so little power in prayer today! We have been trying to live a double standard. We've been trying to live in sin and have God too. We must cry out for God to change our hearts and to save us!

Key 7: WITH FORGIVENESS.

We must pray from a heart of forgiveness. Jesus counsels us, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

But it doesn't stop there. Jesus preaches in the Sermon on the Mount, "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you; Leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23, 24).

Inspiration expounds further: "When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our hearts... If we expect our own prayers to be heard we must forgive others in the same manner and to the same extent as we hope to be forgiven."²⁷

Key 8: WITH HONOR.

We must pray from a lifestyle of honoring our family. 1 Peter 3:7 commands, "Husbands, likewise dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

Isn't it amazing that how we love (or don't love) our family members can hinder our prayers?

Key 9: OUT OF STEWARDSHIP.

We must pray from a lifestyle of good stewardship. Did you know that how we act as "stewards" of God's resources affects our prayers?

As the Giver of every blessing, God claims a certain portion of all we possess. This is His provision to sustain the preaching of the gospel. And by making this return to God, we

²⁶ *Child Guidance*, p. 499

²⁷ *Steps to Christ*, p. 97

are to show our appreciation of His gifts. But if we withhold from Him that which is His own, how can we claim His blessing? . . . how can we expect Him to entrust us with the things of heaven? It may be that here is the secret of unanswered prayer.²⁸

The LORD sends this message through Malachi:

“Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’
In tithes and offerings.
You are cursed with a curse.
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.
Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,”
Says the LORD of hosts,
“If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:8-10).

Key 10: WITH GENEROSITY.

We must pray from a lifestyle of generosity towards those in need. Good stewardship is more than just paying our tithe. It is also reaching out to those in need. “Therefore, to him who knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

Here we see that another foundational principle to receiving answered prayer. We are warned, “Whoever shuts his ears at the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard” (Proverbs 21:13).

Key 11: TO KNOW THE GIVER.

We must pray to know the Giver. Jesus Himself prays to the Father, “And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3)

Our sole object and purpose in prayer should be to know the Giver. God is not some magician in the sky, just waiting to fulfill our daily shopping list and to rain down blessings on us. He is looking for our love, our devotion, and our adoration. That’s why Psalm 37:4 proclaims, “Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

Key 12: WITH PERSEVERANCE.

²⁸ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 144

Finally, if we are going to receive answers to prayer, we must pray with persistence and perseverance. We can't stop when we get tired or when our prayers seem hopeless, but we must pray until we understand the answer. Inspiration imparts to us, "Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving."²⁹

That's why Jesus instructs us to "Ask... Seek... Knock..." (Matthew 7:7) and to keep knocking! That's why the widow was rewarded in her prayers with the unjust judge in Luke 18. She kept knocking and she persevered, and that's the kind of patience that God is looking for in us—people who won't give up, but who keep knocking!

Ellen White wisely penned, "There is no danger that the Lord will neglect the prayers of His people. The danger is that in temptation and trial they will become discouraged, and fail to persevere in prayer."³⁰

God is not trying to make prayer difficult or complicated for us. He's just looking for people that are so desperate to find Him, that when they do, they will follow Him all the way.

[Share a personal answered prayer story]

Let's pray for deeper hearts of consecration today. Let's claim those showers of blessing that God is waiting to pour out upon those who take Him at His Word! Let's get on our knees and truly pray!

—End of Sabbath School program—

²⁹ *Steps to Christ*, p. 97

³⁰ *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 175

Seminar

The Heart Where God Delights to Dwell

[The Beauty of Brokenness and Humility]

By Melody Mason

Suggested Program

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 57:15

“For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is* Holy:
'I dwell in the high and holy *place*,
With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”

Prayer

Special Music (optional)

Seminar Presentation: “The Heart Where God Delights to Dwell”

Breakout Session of Prayer: Pray over the reading, “The Beauty of Humility”

Wrap Up and Conclusion

Closing Song: 316, “Live Out Thy Life Within Me,” *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

Prayer

The Heart Where God Delights to Dwell

[The Beauty of Brokenness and Humility]

By Melody Mason

Have you ever thought about the kind of heart God where God delights to dwell?

(Intro slide 1 → Slide 2)

The Bible tells us, “For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones’” (Isaiah 57:15).

When we look through Scripture, we find that over and over again God delights to dwell with those that are broken and humble in heart. Is this because God likes to see us cry? No! It’s because it is the broken and humble hearted that know they need a Savior, and they are not too proud to be able to learn.

Unfortunately, proud people have difficulty coming close to God...

(Slide 3)

As one pastor has said, “Pride doesn’t listen, it already knows.”

(Slide 4)

Another writes, “Pride is the only disease that makes everyone sick except the one who has it!”

(Slide 5)

Still another says, “Pride is the carbon monoxide of sin. It silently and slowly kills you without you even knowing.”³¹

(Slide 6)

I’m sure you can relate to these statements about pride, and perhaps you are thinking of someone in your life that you wish could hear this message right now. But this seminar is not about that someone else—this seminar is about *you and me!* We need to be asking ourselves, “Is there pride in my own heart that might be holding back God’s blessing?”

(Slides 7, 8, 9 – Long quote)

The following passage from the book *Steps to Christ* puts things in real perspective and helps us understand more clearly why this is such an important issue in the life of a believer:

³¹ Quote by Tim Keller on social media.

“However trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man’s judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; **while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked**. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give.”³²

(Slide 10 - quote)

Remember what we talked about this morning? “Our only claim to [God’s] mercy is our great need.”³³ So, if in humility we recognize our need, we have hope!

(Slide 11 – woman in desert)

Remember, if you are feeling a bit overwhelmed, feeling like you are living in a dusty spiritual wilderness and you don’t know how to get out, then you are at the perfect place for God to work! God loves to work with dry bones. And He loves to work with dust!

Jesus tells us, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Luke 5:32). If we recognize that we are sinners, then we can be encouraged, for we qualify for the gift of salvation.

But back to humility! If God is calling us to cultivate hearts of humility, what does that look like in everyday life?

(Slide 12 – roof off)

In the book *Continuous Revival: The Secret to Victorious Living*, author Norman Grubb writes the following:

All Christian relationships are *two-way*, not *one-way*. They are *horizontal* as well as *vertical*... We cannot, for instance, say that we have become righteous before God through faith in Christ and yet continue to be unrighteous among men.³⁴

Let me put it this way. We can liken a man to a house. It has a roof and walls. So also man in his fallen state has a roof on top of his sins, coming between him and God; and he also has walls up, between him and his neighbor. But at salvation, when broken at the cross, not only does the roof come off through faith in Christ, but the walls fall down flat, and man’s true condition as a sinner-saved-by-grace is confessed before all men.

³² *Steps to Christ*, p. 30

³³ *Ministry of Healing*, p. 161

³⁴ Norman Grubb, *Continuous Revival: The Secret to Victorious Living*, p. 18, 19

Unfortunately, the trouble soon begins again after conversion—and here lies the basic hindrance to continued revival. Continued revival is continued brokenness; but brokenness is two-way, and that means that the walls [must be] kept down as well as roof off. But man's most deep-rooted and subtle sin is the subtle sin of pride: self-esteem and self-respect. Though hardly realizing it, while we are careful to keep the roof off between ourselves and God through repentance and faith, we soon let those walls of respectability creep up again between ourselves and our brethren. We don't mind our brethren knowing about the success we have in our Christian living. If we win a soul, if we lead a class, if we have a prayer answered, if we get good ideas from Scriptures—we don't mind if they hear about these things, because we get a little reflected credit because of them....

If God has to deal with us over our impatience or temper in the home, over dishonesty in our business, over coldness or some other sin, by no means do we easily bear testimony to our brethren of God's faithful and gracious dealings in such areas of failure. Why not? Just because of pride...The fact is, we love the praise of men as well as of God, and that is exactly what the Scriptures say stops the flow of confession before men (John 12:42-43).³⁵

(Slide 13 – quote)

Andrew Murray writes in his book *Humility and Absolute Surrender*, “It is easy to think we humble ourselves before God: but humility towards men will be the only sufficient proof that our humility before God is real.”

(Slides 14, 15 – quote)

Ellen White writes,

Let the proud spirit bow in humiliation. Let the hard heart be broken. No longer pet and pity and exalt self. Look, oh look upon Him whom our sins have pierced. See Him descending step by step the path of humiliation to lift us up; abasing Himself till He could go no lower, and all to save us who were fallen by sin! Why will we be so indifferent, so cold, so formal, so proud, so self-sufficient? Who of us is faithfully following the Pattern? Who of us has instituted and continued the warfare against pride of heart? Who of us has, in good earnest, brought himself to wrestle with selfishness until it should no longer dwell in the heart and be revealed in the life?³⁶

Let me share a story!

(Slide 16 – Corrie Ten Boom's testimony)

³⁵ Norman Grubb, *Continuous Revival: The Secret to Victorious Living*, p. 20-22

³⁶ *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 17, 18

A Humbled Heart

CORRIE TEN BOOM'S TESTIMONY³⁷

You may have heard of Corrie Ten Boom who, along with her family, helped save the lives of over 800 Jews during the Nazi Holocaust of World War II. As a result of her family's underground work in Holland the entire family was arrested and sent to the Ravensbrück, one of the most brutal concentration camps in all of Germany. Thousands died here!

By the time Corrie was miraculously released from the concentration camp in December of 1944, all of her closest family members had already died while in prison. However, instead of nursing her wounds or growing bitter, Corrie went on to spend the remaining years of her life traveling the world, sharing the love of Jesus.

Corrie was known and loved for her compassion, and her sweet spirit of grace and humility. And many were brought to Jesus by her testimony. Yet, she was still very human, just like you and me.

One time, while traveling, Corrie shared how she was struggling sitting through a long evening of meetings in Cuba. She had just given a message about the love of God, and then was waiting on the platform as two more men shared lengthy presentations. It was very hot and humid, pesky bugs were everywhere, and it was getting late. Corrie was tired and her patience was wearing thin as the last speaker began to make a lengthy appeal.

"Surely no one is in the mood to do anything but go home," Corrie grumbled to herself. "I hope no one comes forward. I'm aching for my bed."

But to her great surprise many people began coming forward responding to the call. Some had tears in their eyes. Suddenly Corrie recognized the selfishness of her heart. Here she had hoped people would not give their life to Jesus that night simply because she was tired, hot, and weary. Immediately she confessed her sin to God and asked His forgiveness, then she got up to pray with those who had come forward.

The next day, Corrie was asked to speak at a large church in an upper-class area of Havana. Many prominent and affluent people were present. As she came into church that morning, they handed her the program booklet that contained her flowery introduction. It read: "Corrie Ten Boom is a most popular world evangelist.... She is tireless and completely selfless in her absolute dedication to the cause of the gospel." As Corrie read the introduction her heart sank. "Oh Lord," she prayed, "if only these people knew who the real Corrie Ten Boom is, they would *not* have come to hear me speak this morning."

³⁷ This is Corrie Ten Boom's real name and real picture.

“Why don’t you tell them who the real Corrie is...” the Holy Spirit answered. Immediately Corrie began to protest. “But Lord, if I tell them, what if they reject me?” Again, she heard the soft but firm voice, “Can I bless a lie?”

So that morning Corrie told her audience the painful truth. As a result, many hearts were broken and the foundation for genuine revival was laid.

(Slide 17 – quote)

(Slide 18 – question)

What is true brokenness you might wonder? Some think it is constant morbid introspection. Others think it’s about being overly emotional in religious services or depressed in spirit while everyone else is happy. Others might think that it is about silently accepting abuse from others year after year. It is actually none of the above. The reality is that many have endured private pain, and still more have shed buckets of tears, and yet have never experienced true genuine brokenness.

(Slide 19 – quote)

True brokenness is a moment-by-moment lifestyle of agreeing with God about the true condition of my heart and life—not as everyone else thinks it is but as He knows it to be. Brokenness is the shattering of my self-will—the absolute surrender of my will to the will of God. It is saying, ‘Yes, Lord!’—no resistance, no chafing, no stubbornness—simply submitting myself [no matter the pain or cost] to His direction and will in my life.³⁸

This afternoon we are going to take some time to pray and ask God to help us come to a genuine inner brokenness, a genuine recognition of our great spiritual need.

The reading for our prayer time is **“The Beauty of Humility.”**

Now I have to warn you, this is not easy to read because it cuts! It cut my heart when I first read it because I recognized all the ways I have need of God’s saving grace. But that’s why it’s important to share.

(Slide 20 – quote)

Inspiration tells us, “We shall often have to bow down to weep at the feet of Jesus, because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be discouraged.... As we distrust our own power, we shall trust the power of our Redeemer.”³⁹

³⁸ Nancy Demoss, *Brokenness*, p. 44

³⁹ *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 337

Remember Jesus is with us, and He is bringing us to the foot of the cross. *And that's the very best place to be!*

The Beauty of Humility

A PRAYERFUL READING

[Note: There are **two** different readings on the Beauty of Humility beginning on page 34. You can choose to use the short one-page reading, or the deeper, more extended, long version. The short version is included in this packet for distributing during the seminar, if possible.]

Breakout Prayer Session Ideas:

(Slide 21 Short version of Beauty of Humility!)

(Slides 22 – 33 Long Version of Beauty of Humility!)

The prayer breakout session could be led several different ways.

1. Two people could read several sections from the “Beauty of Humility” from the front. One person reading the HUMILITY part, and the other person reading the PRIDE part. Then you could allow small groups to pray together over the points read.
2. Presenter could read several sections from the “Beauty of Humility” from the front and then lead a few minutes of united prayer in response to the points mentioned, where everyone prays together, and then repeat until all the points covered.
3. Presenter could read thru the entire “Beauty of Humility” and then give time to small groups to discuss and pray at the end.
4. Presenter could hand out the small one-page version of “Pride versus Humility” and allow small groups to read and pray through. Or ask people to take time to pray on their own.

IMPORTANT POINT: When we are convicted about something, it's important to follow up that conviction with prayer. Don't go through the “Beauty of Humility” without adequate spaces of time for prayer response.

The Beauty of Humility

[Contrasts Between Pride and Humility]

CONTRASTS

- **Proud self-filled people see all the good they do and feel worthy of Salvation.**
- Humble selfless people know that only through Christ's righteousness can they gain Salvation.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

- **Proud self-filled people feel confident and proud of how much they know.**
- Humble selfless people feel humbled by how much they have yet to learn.

"Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: 'Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?'" (2 Samuel 7:18).

- **Proud self-filled people thank God that they aren't like the world around them.**
- Humble selfless people realize that "pride" itself is as deadly as the sins of the world.

"Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished" (Proverbs 16:5).

- **Proud self-filled people carry grudges because they have difficulty saying, "I was wrong. Will you forgive me?"**
- Humble selfless people are quick to say, "I'm sorry, let's work this out."

"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23, 24).

- **Proud self-filled people tend to focus on the failures and weaknesses of others and are unmoved by another's brokenness.**
- Humble selfless people feel deeply their own weaknesses and great spiritual need and are sensitive to those who are broken.

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

- **Proud self-filled people have to prove they are right and save face even when they are wrong.**
- Humble selfless people are willing to yield the “right to be right” in situations even when they are right, as they are more worried about being righteous before God than being right before men.

“For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil” (1 Peter 3:17).

- **Proud self-filled people are selfishly protective of personal space, time, and their reputation.**
- Humble selfless people have a generous giving spirit and are willing to be inconvenienced, allowing God to protect their space, time, and reputation.

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38).

- **Proud self-filled people are too busy to notice or reach out to the “small people” in their lives, those who can’t benefit them in some specific way.**
- Humble selfless people are always seeking to serve and minister to even the “least of these” as unto Jesus.

“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’” (Matthew 25:40).

- **Proud self-filled people desire to be recognized and applauded, and they covet promotions, trophies and awards.**
- Humble selfless people desire to be faithful that God’s glory may be seen, and they shy away from recognition or applause.

“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth” (Psalm 115:1).

- **Proud self-filled people are quick to flaunt their titles and great achievements and feel entitled to special treatment.**
- Humble selfless people don’t need to speak of their titles or achievements, and they are content to go unnoticed as long as God gets the glory.

“Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man?” (Proverbs 20:6).

- **Proud self-filled people use their life and any influence they've received as a stage to showcase themselves.**
- Humble selfless people use the stage and influence God has given to seek to exalt Christ and make sure only He is seen.

"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

- **Proud self-filled people have difficulty serving and submitting to others, and they are especially prone to criticize and murmur against those in positions of authority or leadership.**
- Humble selfless people, like Jesus, serve all in humility, without regard to status or position. They lift up those who can do them no benefit, as well as respectfully seeking to hold up the arms of those in authority.

"And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:27, 28).

- **Proud self-filled people are always thinking about the good things they do for God, and how the church or ministry couldn't do without them.**
- Humble selfless people realize that without God, they can do nothing of value for His Kingdom. They feel humbled just to be used at all.

"For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

- **Proud self-filled people are often cold, distant, rigid, unforgiving and unapproachable. When misunderstandings occur, they wait for others to make the first move.**
- Humble selfless people are warm, loving, welcoming in their manners, forgiving, and easy to be entreated. They are quick to make amends.

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31, 32).

- **Proud self-filled people are often defensive when criticized, and don't want others to know when they have made a mistake or done wrong.**
- Humble selfless people receive criticism with a humble open heart and seek to grow by it. They are not overly concerned when others see their failures.

"For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights" (Proverbs 3:12).

- **Proud self-filled people tend to walk alone and have difficulty sharing their spiritual struggles and needs with others.**
- Humble selfless people are willing to be open, vulnerable, and real before others. They aren't concerned about appearing weak, but want to be genuine that God's strength can be glorified even in their times of weakness.

"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

- **Proud self-filled people, when confessing sins to God, tend to confess in vague generalities. "Dear God, please forgive me for all my sins."**
- Humble selfless people, when confessing sins to God, always confess specific sins. "Dear God, please forgive me for _____."

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16).

- **Proud self-filled people are concerned with being respectable and not a spectacle, and thus they often live a self-righteous façade.**
- Humble selfless people are more concerned with being right with God, and they shun all forms of hypocrisy or double living.

"For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

- **Proud self-filled people compare themselves to others and feel deserving of honor and salvation.**
- Humble selfless people recognize their true sinful condition, and praise God that He sent His Son so that, though undeserving, they could receive salvation and honor.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

- **Proud self-filled people think they are pretty much ok, but they are blind to their true heart condition.**
- Humble selfless people have a continual attitude of "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

"And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'" (Luke 18:13).

- **Proud self-filled people don't think they need revival, but they think everyone else does.** (In fact, right about now, they are making a mental list of all those who need to read this list.)
- Humble selfless people will be the first to acknowledge that they need daily spiritual revival! They are constantly sensing their need of a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives.

*“Will You not revive us again, That Your people may rejoice in You?” (Psalm 85:6).
 “Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily” (Psalm 86:3, KJV).*

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[Take time during afternoon workshop to pray over this year's prayer focus, and the “Beauty of Humility” reading. Then close program.]

[SLIDE 34 – praise, Ezekiel]

Wrap Up and Conclusion after Prayer Time:

Can we say PRAISE THE LORD, that we serve a God who can bring dry bones to life?

We serve a God who can change hearts! (Ezekiel 36:26)

We serve a God who can take a proud heart and make it beautiful in sweet humility!

[SLIDE 35 – dust]

Once again... let's give God our dust!

As we've learned this afternoon, there are two places where God dwells... one is in the high and holy place, and the other is with the broken and contrite heart—the heart of humility!

[SLIDE 36 – praise, Psalm]

There's one more place though, that we haven't mentioned, where God delights to dwell!

He delights to dwell in the hearts of those who praise His name!

The Bible tells us, God inhabits the praises of His people!

[SLIDE 37 – praise, 2 Peter]

As we close this afternoon program, let's praise God that He has given us all that we need for life and godliness... And what the enemy has meant for evil, God can turn to good.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to glory and virtue, **by which have been**

given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:2-4).

—End of Sabbath afternoon Seminar—