

We Are God's Collaborators

by Bayless Conley

Are you ready? Are you ready outside on the Plaza? I hope so.

Lord, we ask You for a spirit of wisdom and illumination. Jesus, You said when the Holy Spirit would come that He would lead and guide us into all of the truth. You also said that Your Word is truth. Sanctify them. Set them apart through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Father, we pray that these hearts of ours would understand and comprehend Your Word today. By Your grace, we're going to choose to be doers of the Word.

Those who act upon it, not just those who admire it, not just those who applaud it, but those who apply it to their lives. Lord, we thank You for the family of God. We thank You for church. We thank You for what You're doing throughout the world. We thank You that the tide of spiritual awareness is rising in our country and in different countries throughout the world. We just praise You. Thank You for what You're doing and for what You will do, to the glory of Jesus Christ. Amen.

First Corinthians 3:9 NIV says,

⁹ For we are co-workers in God's service.

The best translation I've found is the Reina Valera, the Spanish Bible. It literally says, "We are God's collaborators." That's the closest I've found to the original Greek. We are God's collaborators. Now, Paul made that statement about himself and about Apollos. The apostle Paul was that. He was an apostle and a teacher. Apollos was a traveling teacher. They were working with and working for God to advance the Kingdom and spread the good news of the redemption of Christ. Though we personally may not have the roles that Paul and Apollos had.

We're maybe not called to labor as they did, but we're still, every one of us, called to collaborate with God and to co-labor with God in one way or another. To bring the knowledge of our blessed Savior to this broken world. I just want to share with you three things that all of us are called to participate in. Three ways that every single believer is called to collaborate with God in this great work of advancing His Kingdom, spreading the good news, and winning people to Christ. They're pretty simple: pray, proclaim, and plant. The first one is that we're all called to collaborate with God through prayer, to pray. Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 9:36–38 TLB. It says,

³⁶ And what pity he felt for the crowds that came, because their problems were so great and they didn't know what to do or where to go for help. They were like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ "The harvest is so great, and the workers are so few," he told his disciples. ³⁸ "So pray to the one in charge of the harvesting, and ask him to recruit more workers for his harvest fields."

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Jesus didn't tell us to pray for something that God wouldn't do. He told us to pray for something that was the will of the Father, and it's something that we can fully expect God to do. His great heart was broken when He saw the multitude of people. Their problems were so great. They didn't know what to do. They didn't know where to go for help. And His heart is breaking. He said, "They're like sheep without a shepherd. Pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth more workers, more laborers into the harvest." It's interesting to me. Jesus said, "They were like sheep without a shepherd." That word shepherd is the same Greek word translated as "pastor" in the New Testament. I think God's greatest strategy for reaching the multitude is to plant churches and to raise up shepherds. That is God's number one strategy in the whole world for reaching the lost.

I think we should pray that God will plant and raise up churches in our communities, in our state, and around the world because people are like sheep without a shepherd. If you get a good church with good shepherds that is evangelistic in nature, they feed the sheep—but there's just this evangelistic edge to the church—we're going to see people come to Christ. Jesus said, "Pray for this. Pray for the people who are like sheep without a shepherd. Pray for workers and especially, pray for pastors and pray for churches to be planted." God will answer those prayers if we pray. He would never tell us to pray for something that He wasn't willing to do. Secondly, this is 2 Thessalonians 3:1 TLB. It says,

¹ Finally, dear brothers, as I come to the end of this letter, I ask you to pray for us. Pray first that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and triumph wherever it goes, winning converts everywhere as it did when it came to you.

So we need to pray that the message of the gospel will spread rapidly and triumph. That word literally means it'll be celebrated. It'll be honored as opposed to being rejected. Again, this is something in the Scriptures. Paul, inspired by the Spirit, said, "Pray specifically for this." We should pray that where the gospel is preached, it'll be celebrated, it'll be embraced rather than rejected. That it will triumph over darkness, it will triumph over sin, and it will triumph over the devil, and converts will be won. Then listen to these verses. Colossians 4:2–4 NKJV. Paul, again, writing, inspired by the Spirit, said,

² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; ³ meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

That literally means that I might make it clear and understandable as I ought to. So pray for those who are sharing the gospel message that there will be clarity. Pray for open doors and that God would open doors to people's hearts. That God would open doors to families, that God would open doors to communities, and that God would open doors to nations. You'd be surprised sometimes what an open door can look like.

Janet and I, many years ago, in the home we were living in, there was an older woman living in the home, and her grown son moved in with her. I tried to talk with him a few times about the gospel, and he was not interested. I just began to pray, "God, give me an open door. Give me an open door." I'm just praying that God would give me an open door for this young man's heart.

One day, I'm out watering my lawn, and I've actually just been praying for an open door for him. He drives up in his pickup truck, and I'd never noticed it before, there was a little sticker on the back window of his pickup truck, and it said Leather Wolf. Leather Wolf was an Orange County

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heavy metal band. I just knew the moment I saw it, "That's my door." I said, "Hey!" He gets out of the truck. "Do you like Leather Wolf?" He says, "Oh man!" Suddenly, I had his full attention. "They are awesome! They are so incredible! I love Leather Wolf!" I said, "Well, I've met the lead singer before." He said, "You have?" I said, "I have. In fact, his older brother is our worship leader at our church," which was true. He goes, "No way!" I said, "Yeah, and if you think that guy is a good singer, you ought to hear his brother sing. He is way better." He goes, "You're kidding?!" I said, "No." He said, "How can I hear him sing?" I said, "Come to service Sunday night."

He came. He came to church. When I gave the invitation, he walked forward and gave his heart to Christ. Who would have thought? But if we pray for open doors, God will open doors to people's hearts. He'll open a door to a family. You'd be surprised sometimes what that open door can be. To a community and even to a nation. Our prayers make a difference.

I was just—got back two weeks ago now—but I spent two weeks in Germany and the Netherlands preaching in different cities. We saw hundreds of people come to Christ. I was having a meeting in Ede in the Netherlands, and I met with a family before the service started. A father, a mother, and a teenage girl. All of them were on fire for God, but the teenage girl was burning so brightly for Christ that you just wanted to have an asbestos suit on to sit next to her.

She was on fire. She had been in a really dark place in her life, going down a really, really dark road, and mom and dad prayed for her. God opened a door to this girl's heart, and I'm telling you, she caught fire. Literally, you were feeling the flames across the room. This girl was burning so brightly for Christ. Maybe you have unsaved loved ones, family members, or neighbors. Pray. God will open doors. Your prayers make a difference. So the first thing we can do is pray.

The second thing is to proclaim. We do have a responsibility. After we talk to God about men, we need to talk to men about God. The verses we read in Colossians, where Paul was asking for prayer for himself, that he might make the message clear as he ought to. He asked them to pray for open doors. In the very next breath, listen to what he says. Verse 5 NKJV,

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

That means those who are outside of the Kingdom of God. Those who are unsaved. Walk in wisdom toward them, redeeming the time. That means seize every opportunity. He's talking about sharing Christ. Buy up every opportunity. He goes on and says,

⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

We need to pray and talk to God about men, but we also need to talk to men about God. We need to walk in wisdom toward those who are on the outside. Our speech should be seasoned with salt. That means that it should be gracious, should be intelligent, and should be interesting. It's how we ought to answer each person and the idea is they've asked you about your faith. This person needs one answer. This person needs to be answered a different way. This person needs a different answer.

God will give us wisdom and help us to season our speech with the salt of the gospel when we share with people. Because you can share the right message in the wrong way and turn somebody off. I think we've all experienced that. Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I will make you

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fishers of men." There are a lot of different ways to fish for fish. In the same way, there are a lot of different ways to fish for men.

In the same river, you've got one guy, and he's trolling for fish. Somebody else is bottom fishing. Somebody else is casting from the shore. One guy is using bait. Another guy is throwing lures. Someone else is fly fishing. Someone else is casting a net. Another person is setting a trot line. They're all fishing. They're just using different methods. Why would we assume that there is only one way to fish for men or only one way to proclaim the gospel?

Let me share with you just quickly six possible styles or methods of sharing our faith. Or six different styles of fishing for men. The first one, we'll call it confrontational. Peter is a perfect example. In Acts 2, the day of Pentecost, he boldly addresses a large crowd. He starts off with, "God attested to Jesus through the miracles He did, and you know it. But you took Him with your wicked hands, you crucified Him, and you killed Him, but God raised Him from the dead, and He is both Lord and Christ, and you need to repent and be baptized."

Peter just opened up and let them have it. Tact didn't seem to be a major consideration of his, and it was effective. Three thousand people were saved. The truth is, some will only be reached when they are confronted straightforwardly with their sin and with their need to repent. Peter was very action-oriented. He was the one who was wired up to make things happen. Of the disciples, he was always the first one to speak up. He was always the first one to move. He was always the first one to act.

They're out there in the storm and Jesus comes walking on the water. Who is it who pipes up and says, "Lord, if it's You, bid me to come?" It's Peter. Who steps out of the boat? It's Peter. They're in the Garden of Gethsemane. Who chops the guy's ear off? It's Peter. He's always doing something. He was the perfect one to stand up on the day of Pentecost and stir things up.

God has equipped certain believers with a combination of personality, gifts, and desires that make it natural for them to confront others. Did God make you that way? Then get to it. As you do, allow God to lead you. Endeavor to be sensitive as to which people need to be presented with a bold, frank look at the truth, so you know how you ought to answer each person. The second method, second style is intellectual. Acts 17:1-4 NKJV,

¹ Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² Then Paul, as his custom was, (That's what he did most of the time. As his custom was,) went in to them, and for three Sabbaths (he) reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

Though Paul could be confrontational, just like Peter was, also led by the Spirit, he often used this intellectual approach to evangelism. He reasoned with them, and he proved from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior. Now, we're not just talking about bombarding someone with intellectual arguments, but rather sharing things that you know in your heart that you've studied and they make sense to you, and you present them as evidence.

It's not just a head trying to reach a head. It's a heart trying to reach another heart through the gateway of that person's intellect. Some of you here are wired up that way. Many people have

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been saved by reading men like C.S. Lewis, Chesterton, or even intellectual mystics like Tozer. They present sound biblical as well as historical arguments that lead men to consider Christ. And again, maybe that's you. You like analyzing things. You like reasoning things out. If so, prepare. Study, read, and learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Don't always just launch off into your intellectual argument. By all means, use your mind, but stay connected to your heart.

There are some people, and that's the way they're going to be reached. You've got to reason with them. You've got to bring proof to them, and they will consider that, and the Holy Spirit will use it. We come to a third way that we can fish for men and share, that is testimonial. Do you remember the man who was born blind that Jesus healed? We read about him in John 9:24–27 NKJV.

²⁴ So they again called the man (this is the Pharisees, the Jewish leaders, called the man) who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶ Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

Verse 32–33 NKJV, he says this, "Since the beginning of the world,"

³² "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. ³³ If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

Those who fish for men with this method don't confront. They don't intellectualize. They simply share what Jesus has done in their life. They tell their story. They say, "God did it for me, and He can do it for you too."

Let me ask you a question. Has God ever answered a prayer of yours? Has He ever given you peace, healed your body, saved your marriage, delivered you from darkness, and given you a new heart and a fresh start? Well, tell your story then, without being preachy. Just tell your story in a conversational way. God will use it.

It's almost 50 years on, and I'm still telling people all the time about the 12-year-old kid who told me about Jesus and how I got saved in a street mission in Medford, Oregon. I take my cue from the Apostle Paul. At the end of his life, he's standing before kings, and do you know what he said? "I was on the Damascus Road, this light from heaven shined, and I heard a voice. It said, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting?'"

He's sharing his testimony at the end of his life. Some of you just need to tell your stories. Opportunities will present themselves to those who are willing to speak up. It's absolutely true. We come to a fourth method, a fourth style of fishing for men. We'll call it relational. Jesus set a demoniac free, and we read it in Mark 5:18–20 NKJV.

¹⁸ And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. ¹⁹ However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." ²⁰ And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

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Now, Jesus said, "Go home to your friends." He didn't send him to go knock on the doors of strangers, which is okay, but he said, "Go home to your friends. Share your faith with those who you're close to. Live a transformed life before them, pray for them, and then, as opportunity arises, share your story." This guy, actually, probably like most of us, had friends all over. Decapolis was a region of 10 cities, and he went and shared with his friends. It says, "All marveled," which lets us know that those who heard the story told others who told others.

It happens all the time. Some guy at work is talking to his friend. Their marriages are on the rocks, and they've got drug issues. He's saying, "My buddy told me about a friend of his who got into this Jesus thing, and he got set free from drugs, and God restored his marriage. From what I understand, his marriage was worse than mine. I'm going to go to church on Sunday. Do you want to go with me?" You just don't know. There's this domino effect that happens sometimes, just when we share relationally. We talk to our friends. We talk to those we're close to.

When I first got saved, I met this guy. He had just come into town, and I still remember seeing him when he came in. He'd been in India, I think, for a couple of years. He was maybe 4 years older than me. He'd been studying mysticism and different things over there. When I met him, he had a silk turban and silk robes on. He was purported to be something between a guru and a shaman. He immediately had a pretty good following of people. He became their teacher and their spiritual guide.

Somebody shared Jesus with him, and he got saved around the same time that I did. I still remember sitting in an apartment and him telling his story to me. Turban, robes, everything. He's sitting there meditating like he does every day, but now someone has shared the gospel with him. Just a clear, simple message of what Christ has done on the cross.

He said, "Suddenly, while I was doing my daily meditations, I had a vision. In front of me, there was this pile of wood chips that just went up. You couldn't even really see the top of it. I intuitively understood that those represented my sins. In this vision, I had a pair of tweezers, and I would take one of the little wood chips, I would look at it, I would meditate on it, I would turn it over for a long time, and then I would lay it down in another pile.

Nothing happened to it. I just moved it from one place to another. Then I would grab another wood chip representing one of my sins, and I would meditate on it, look at it, turn it over, and then do it. Then suddenly, this ball of fire came out of the heavens and just, poof, destroyed. There was nothing left of that whole pile of wood chips. And the voice of God spoke to me and said, "This is what My Son's sacrifice has done to your sins." He got saved.

As soon as he got saved, he told all of his friends and all of his followers about Jesus. He took off the silk stuff and started dressing normally. A whole bunch of his followers and friends got saved. Well, Jesus said, "Go tell your friends what God's done for you and how He's had compassion on you." The fifth method is invitational. The woman at the well at Sychar, Jesus revealed to her that He was the Messiah. We read in John 4:28-30 NKJV,

²⁸ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,

²⁹ "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

³⁰ Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

I like her style. She just said, "Come and see. Decide for yourself. Could this be the Christ? I'm not telling you He is, but just come check it out." And they came, and if you read on, a bunch of

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them came to the conclusion that Jesus was the Son of God. Generally, before every service, I'm out greeting people as they're coming into church.

Listen, almost without fail, every single week, I run into somebody who says, "Pastor, hi, I'm just waiting for my friend. I invited her to come today. It's her first time." They're sort of looking out in the parking lot, looking at their watch, and waiting for their friend. Almost every single week, there are people out there waiting for their friends to come who they've invited.

I'm sure a lot of times you say, "Come and see. Decide for yourself. Just an invitation. Come and see. Come listen to my pastor. Come, the worship is cool. Just come and see." If that fits you, get aggressive and start inviting people to church. Invite them out to the Monday night women's meeting. Invite them out to the Monday night men's meeting. Invite them out to celebrate recovery.

Just extend an invitation and say, "Come and see." You'd be surprised, most people will respond in the affirmative if they're just invited. We come to the sixth and final one that I want to share, and that is serving. Put the gospel in work clothes and let your light shine. Acts 9:36 NKJV says,

³⁶ At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.

She was full of good works and charitable deeds. Everybody is full of something. That's a good thing to be full of. Now, Tabitha died. Peter is in a nearby town. They call for him. He comes into the story. He actually raises her from the dead. But in verse 39 NKJV, it says,

³⁹ Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

Now, Tabitha (or Dorcas), through her good deeds, making garments for the poor and for widows, had impacted lives for God. She used her gift of serving as a tangible expression of the gospel message. Friend, through hospitality, through giving, through showing mercy, through meeting needs, being compassionate and caring, through those things, you can help lead a person to Christ.

I read a story years ago about a guy who lived in an apartment complex. As I recall, I don't even think there was an elevator. It was an older apartment complex. I think he worked at night. During the day, he noticed one of the people who lived in the complex was a woman who lived on a floor above him, and she was elderly. She'd come from the grocery store. She'd go three times a week. She went on the same day. She struggled to get those groceries up the stairs. This guy was a believer.

So he just watched for her every time she came back from the store, and he went down to meet her at the car. He said, "Sweetheart, let me carry those for you." Every day, three times a week, he would carry her groceries up to her apartment. She said, "Thank you. You're so kind." He says, "No, I'm just glad to do it." He never said anything to her and carried those groceries up month after month. Finally, she said, "Why are you so nice to me? No one else here has ever offered to do that."

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He says, "Well, the truth is, there was a time when I wouldn't have thought twice about helping you. But Jesus has changed my life." She said, "You're religious?" He said, "Well, not really, but I'm a Christian." She said, "Would you take me to church?" He took her to church, and she gave her life to Christ. It was through his compassion that he softened her heart enough to where she would hear the message.

I've shared this story numerous times before, but it always gets me when I think about it. A missionary in India, and I don't know what region he was in. There are numerous major languages that are spoken there, so I don't know what the local dialect is. But he was there, and he got tuberculosis.

He ended up in an Indian hospital. He said that right away, he knew that he was resented. The patients resented him. The hospital workers resented him. They thought, "What is this rich Caucasian doing taking up one of our beds?" He said, "Little did they know, I was just as poor as they were. I had a bunch of Gospels of John and a stack of tracts in their language. I tried to give them out. Nobody would take one. No one. They really wanted little to do with me.

One night, there was a man. He was in the final stages of tuberculosis in a bed across from me. I noticed he was trying to sit up in bed, and he'd fall back down. He'd sit up again, fall back down. Then I began to hear him cry softly. I didn't understand what was going on. In the morning, I realized that he'd soiled himself.

He was trying to get up to go to the toilet and wasn't strong enough. The other patients were complaining about the odor. One of the hospital orderlies actually hit him in the face and scolded him. He was so ashamed. He just curled up in a ball and cried. The next night, it happened again. I saw him sit up and fall back down, sit up and fall back down. And he began to cry."

He thought, "I'm sick, but I'm not as sick as that guy. I got up, went over to his bed, and at first, he was afraid. I couldn't speak to him, so I just signaled. Then he realized what I was trying to do. He was skin and bones. I picked him up. I carried him to the toilet, which was just a hole in the ground. I held him under his arms while he took care of his business. Then I took him back to the bed and he kissed me on the cheek.

The next morning, one of the hospital employees woke me up and gave me a cup of hot tea." He said that had never happened before. "Then indicated that they wanted one of those little books I was trying to give out. Within a few hours, every single track, every single book that I had been trying to give out—they came. Patients came. The orderlies came. The hospital employees. I didn't have any more literature to give out. It was all gone within a few hours."

I still remember him saying, "It wasn't something miraculous that happened. It wasn't my preaching ability or my ability to articulate truth. It wasn't because I understood their language. All I did was take an old man to the bathroom, and anybody could have done that." God has called us to serve. There are some people in your world who already know what they need to do. It's just going to take someone serving them in the name of the Lord to soften their heart enough to where they will respond to the message.

A person coming to Christ is like a chain that's got many links. There's a first link, there are links in the middle, and there's a last link. There are many influences, conversations, and contacts that generally precede a person's decision to accept Jesus. At times, you may be the first link in

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that chain. Other times, you're a middle link. Sometimes, you're going to be privileged to be that final link, and you're going to be the one who prays with them.

Whatever the case, may we be faithful to share Jesus in our own style with whatever method God directs. Confrontational, intellectual, testimonial, relational, invitational, or just serving. There's one final thing that we've all been called to collaborate with God in, and that is to plant. We've all been called to pray, we've all been called to proclaim, and we've all been called to plant. That is a metaphor that the New Testament uses for giving in the gospel work. I want to read to you 2 Corinthians 9:6–8 ERV.

⁶ Remember this: The one who plants few seeds will have a small harvest. But the one who plants a lot will have a big harvest. ⁷ Each one of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give. (You should not give if it makes you unhappy or if you feel forced to give.) God loves those who are happy to give. ⁸ And God can give you more blessings than you need, and you will always have plenty of everything. You will have enough to give to every good work.

Now, Paul is writing to the Corinthians, and he actually was able to evangelize to them because of the financial seeds that the Macedonian church had planted so that Paul could go there and preach. We're only here for a little while.

I was talking to a friend yesterday on the phone, and I think I'm still about 28 in here. The mirror never confirms that. This house I'm living in is 70 years old. I was just talking to a friend—the longer we go—this is actually a pastor at the church that I used to serve. I called him yesterday, and we chatted for about half an hour.

I was asking him about people who were in the church there when I was assistant pastor. A number of them were gone. We just got to talking about how the longer we live, the more of our friends and acquaintances leave this world. It really is a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

I just want to wrap this up by circling all the way back to that first thing that Jesus said. He was filled with pity and compassion when He saw the crowds because their problems were so great they didn't know what to do or where to go for help. I can literally tell you that's haunted me all week long. I can't stop thinking about it.

I just know there are some people in here where your problems are so big that you just feel like you don't know what to do. But you're here, that's a good move. I just want to tell you that the Lord's compassionate heart breaks for you. His eye sees you, and He wants to help you. He's well able to help you. Nothing is too difficult for God.

I know some people are in an emotional hurricane right now. You just feel like you're being blown around, and you don't know what to do. You don't know which end is up. The Lord sees you, and He has peace for you, and He has wisdom for you. Whether your problems are so big financially, if it's legal, if it's with your family, if it's with your health, whatever it is, our God sees you, and He cares for you, and He wants to help you.

I just feel like I'm supposed to pray for you as well. Then I want to do one other thing. It's not right to want the Lord's help and not want the Lord. We need to embrace Him. If we really want to experience the blessings He brings, we need to embrace Him because He is the Blessor.

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He's the one who brings those blessings. For me to want all the benefits of Christ's redemption but not want Christ Himself, that's just askew. It doesn't work.

I know there may be people listening to me inside here, perhaps outside, and you've never embraced Jesus. You've never said yes to Him. The truth is, He did die for you on the cross. The vision that the guy had that I shared, listen, He's already paid for your sins in full. The debt has been paid, and the pardon is being offered to you; new life is being offered, but His great work will not benefit you if you don't receive it.

The Bible says, "To as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become the sons or the children of God." But you have to say yes to Jesus Christ and invite Him into your life. I also want to pray for that. In fact, anybody watching me outside or wherever you might be, I'm going to just pray for those who feel like they're going down the drain because of their problems.

If you haven't experienced what depression can be, you should never be quick to judge somebody and just say, "Suck it up." I come from a family that basically, if you cut your hand off at work, you duct tape the stub and you go back to work and you don't say anything. That's just kind of the way I was raised. But depression can be so debilitating, and the fear can be so strong sometimes. You need divine help.

It's not a matter of putting some duct tape on it and just sucking it up. There are some things you cannot handle on your own. God wants to help you. So I'm going to pray. Would that be okay? Would you let your hearts just join with me inside here and out?

Heavenly Father, we come before You, and we thank You for Your great love. You sent Jesus to us. Your Word declares that if You've given us Your Son, how will You not also freely with Him give us all things? So I pray right now through the agency and the power of the Holy Spirit that comfort would come to those who are distraught. May divine wisdom come to those who are in a quandary. May strength come to those who are weak. May healing come to those who are sick.

I come against depression, and I speak to the spirit of fear to go in Jesus Christ's name. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind. Whom the Son sets free is free indeed. Lord, we thank You for Your great redemption. We thank You that You've sent the Holy Spirit. We thank You that we've not been left as orphans. We thank You for Your presence, Your power, and Your purpose that are here. Thank You for Your Spirit resting upon people inside this building and outside, and all those who are watching this right now. I speak these things in the mighty name of Jesus.

Now, just if you would, tie your heart around these words. If you want Christ in your life, if you're a backslider, time to come home. But let your heart grab onto the words and speak them to God. Would you say,

Oh God, I come to You, and I humble my heart. I know I cannot save myself. I look to You for salvation. I look to what Christ has done. I believe that on the cross, He paid my debt in full. He took the punishment for my sins. And I repent from a lifestyle of sin. Jesus, I put my faith in You, the risen Lord and Savior. I give You my life, Jesus. I offer You my all. It's in Your name I pray, amen.

Fantastic.

We Are God's Collaborators

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