

# Sermon Study Notes – Key Points, Questions & Application

## Sermon – Pray Like Your Life Depends on God

Sermon 5 in the Series – “Grow Hungry for Jesus: *His Habits for the Heart*”

Pastor Martin Lifer, Eastminster Church | February 8, 2026

### Key Scripture References

**Primary Passages:** • Psalm 18:4-6 – In my distress I called upon the LORD

• Luke 21:36 – Keep watch at all times, praying

• Luke 22:39-40 – Jesus went according to his habit to pray... when He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you will not enter into temptation!”

• Luke 22:31-32 – “Simon, Simon, behold: Satan demanded to have you to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail....”

### Supporting Passages

• Luke 11:2-4 – “When you pray, say:” *The Lord's Prayer*

• Matthew 26:40-41 – “Could you not watch with Me one hour?”

• Ephesians 6:18 – Pray in the Spirit at all times toward this goal: watch with perseverance and all supplication for all sanctified believers.

• Heb 7:26 He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him – since He always lives to intercede for them.

**Big Idea:** Pray like your life depends on God – because it does; so pray every day, all through the day.

### The Reality Check

Most people's prayer lives are forgettable at best, non-existent at worst—until crisis hits.

**But God's Word says:** Our lives every day are in God's hand. **Your life depends on God every single day, not just crisis days.**

Acts 17:28 – “In Him we live and move and have our being.”

### Common Excuses for Not Praying

“I don't know how.” “I can't focus; my mind wanders. I need to check my phone.”

“I'm not in the mood. I'm not good enough. I'm too angry/ashamed.”

**But when it's life or death—suddenly all excuses disappear.**

**Austin Applebee (13-year-old):** Swam 2.5 miles through choppy water to save his family. “I don't think it was me—it was God. **The whole time I kept praying.**”

**You have the capability to pray like a 13-year-old boy in crisis.**

### Christian Prayer Is Transformation, Not Transaction

**Christian prayer is NOT:**

- Bargaining with God (“If You get me out, I'll do X”)
- Self-improvement techniques
- “Centering prayer” on yourself

### **Christian prayer IS:**

- **God working transformation in us**
- Belonging to God and living with God
- **Christ formed in us** (Galatians 4:19)
- Training in spiritual warfare

## **The Lord's Prayer: Training in Spiritual Warfare**

### **Luke 11:2b-4:**

"Father – let Your name be hallowed; Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those indebted to us. **Do not bring us into temptation.**"

### **Jesus teaches:**

1. Spiritual adoption into God's family
2. Saving trust in all aspects of life
3. **Training in spiritual warfare**

**Many Christians miss that prayer is training in spiritual warfare.**

## **Keep Watch at All Times, Praying**

**Luke 21:36** – Jesus commands: "Keep watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things and stand before the Son of Man."

**Pray for strength in spiritual warfare to stand before Jesus as judge.**

**Luke 18:1** – At all times they ought to pray and not lose heart.

**1 Thessalonians 5:17** – Pray unceasingly.

## **How Often? EVERY DAY.**

"Give us this day our daily bread" – How often? **EVERY DAY.**

**Jesus: "Keep watch at all times."**

**Paul: "Pray unceasingly."**

## **David Understood Spiritual Warfare**

**Psalm 18:4-6:** "The cords of death encompassed me. Torrents of perdition dismayed me. Cords of Sheol encircled me. Snares of death confronted me.

**In my distress I called upon the Lord. From His temple He heard my voice."**

**That's you and me every day—threatened – but we have a God who will be our strength, if we stop thinking WE are our own strength.**

## **The Shallow-Rooted Wheat on Rocky Soil Falls Away in Testing**

**Luke 8:13** – "They receive the Word with joy but have no root. They believe for a season, but in time of testing, fall away."

**That's what we pray about—strength to escape or to persevere in time of testing, and ultimately to stand before Jesus.**

## Jesus' Habit: Pray Every Night

**Luke 22:39-40:** He went according to his habit (Greek: *ethos*—ethic, habit) to the Mount of Olives. On reaching the place (Gethsemane—His prayer place), He said, 'Pray that you will not enter into temptation.'"

Jesus had a HABIT of praying every night at a specific place.

Do you have a prayer place? Jesus did.

## Watch = Pray

For Jesus, "watch" and "pray" are the same thing. Prayer is being on FULL ALERT to spiritual warfare.

**Matthew 26:40-41** – "Could you not WATCH with Me one hour?"

**Ephesians 6:18** – Pray in the Spirit at all times. Watch (be alert) with all perseverance—for the whole church, all believers.

*Don't say you don't have enough to pray about; Ephesians 6:18 provides a whole day's worth of prayer.*

## Peter's Denial: The Key Juncture

**Last Supper:** "Pray you will not enter temptation."

**Peter:** "Even if all fall away, I never will!"

**Jesus:** "Before cockcrow (the Watch ending at 3 AM), you'll deny Me three times."

**The issue:**

- Jesus says: "**Deny yourself**, take up your cross, follow Me"
- Our temptation: **Deny Jesus to save ourselves**

Peter had great faith in HIMSELF—not the kind you want. It won't stand the test.

Pray like your life depends on GOD, not on you.

## Jesus the Intercessor: Our Salvation

**Luke 22:31-32 (AMAZING GRACE—THE GOSPEL):** "Simon, Simon, Satan demanded to have you to sift you all like wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you turn back, strengthen your brothers."

**John 17:15** – "I ask that You keep them from the evil one."

**There's our salvation:** "I have begged for you. I have prayed that your faith may not fail."

**Hebrews 7:25** – "He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near through Him, since He lives to intercede for them."

**Romans 8:34** – "Christ Jesus died, was raised, and is at God's right hand interceding for us."

Do you understand what He's done for you? How He prays for you?

Will you wake up and join Him in prayer—our great Intercessor?

## **Three Takeaways This Week**

- 1. Believe Jesus—your Intercessor—and pray WITH Him.**
- 2. Put a WATCH PLAN in your daily calendar reminding you of daily times of prayer.**
- 3. Pray like your life depends on God—because it absolutely does.**

**Jesus took the cup of suffering and condemnation, so you could share the cup of His grace.**

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1. Excuses •** Which excuse do you use most? What would laying it down look like?
- 2. Watch = Pray •** How does "prayer as full alert in spiritual warfare" change your view?
- 3. Jesus' Habit •** Do you have a prayer place and daily habit? What would that look like?

## **Closing Challenge**

**Create a watch plan. Build prayer habits. Pray WITH Jesus.**