



Sermon – April 14, 2019
Chris Osborne

Verses Covered

Ephesians 3:20 – 21

1 John 5:14 - 15

Ephesians 6:18 – 19

1 Kings 18:20 – 35

Romans 8:26

So my wife went to see the movie, I did not, but she went to see the movie, true story, about the Planned Parenthood clinic here in Bryan. And the fact that there were a number of us from this church that prayed down there, and that in time after this prayer time, not only was the clinic closed, but one of the ladies in it, obviously, became a vibrant pro-life person. And the movie's pretty much about that change and that victory. I've got to be honest. When I was down there praying, I was there as much peaceful protest as I was praying. There were always some people that when the young girls got out of the car, they would accost them all the way up. Didn't want to do that. Wanted to just be there to say outside the gate, "I'm against what's happening in there, but I'm not against the people going in there." And so my time there was, honestly if I'm confessing here, was as much that as really praying. Because I prayed for a lot of different things. But it's interesting to me that you have this group of people that prayed, a lot of others for the agenda, one purposed agenda, that this thing would end. And it did. Except that God went literally, I don't think there's a single person there that prayed, "Let somebody come out of here, change to pro-life, and let there be a movie made about it that will impact thousands of lives." I don't think anybody prayed that. It was as if God went beyond what we prayed.

Now listen to Ephesians 3, verse 20. We come to the last section on the position that you are in Christ and that He is in you and what the benefits are from that. Now listen to this.

²⁰To the One who is able to go beyond anything we ask or think

Is that not the perfect description of what happened in Bryan, Texas? You've got a group of people praying and God literally went beyond what anybody was thinking and beyond what anybody was praying. Now that's, that's the promise. And so we have this responsibility to believe that. So when the Bible says in 1 Timothy that we're to pray for our areas and our leaders in our areas, that we might lead an easy life so that we can present the gospel out there. There's our responsibility.

We're actually supposed to think, apparently, that if I pray correctly, He'll go even beyond my prayer. But most of us, most of us have stopped. We don't do that. We don't pray like we should because deep down we don't really buy verse 20. But it is true. He will go beyond my prayer life. So when I ask God, based on what He's told me to do, and I pray for leadership, for example, I think you pray for those you're connected to. We've got Bill Flores in this church who is a congressman. I don't think there should be a week that his name doesn't come out of your lips to the Father. Because he's connected to us and we have a responsibility. And so we need to pray that direction because God's will goes beyond. One of the reasons probably we're in such a mess is because we don't think that's true. Now I want you to listen to exactly what he says here so that we're clear. Look at this. The one able to do beyond whatever we ask or think, now listen,

according to the power that works in us.

Now what is the power that works in us? Not a trick question here. I love Baptists. So who's in us? OK. You guys are so good. So the power that's in us is the person of the Holy Spirit. So what he says is, OK, now listen, he says, the Father will go beyond what you even think or pray about based on, there's the Greek, based on the Holy Spirit's release of power and direction inside your life. That is the key. We've talked about this before. I want you to listen to 1 John because you always hear people say, God's going to answer with yes, no, maybe, you've got to be kidding me. Listen to 1 John 5:14.

¹⁴This is the confidence we have toward Him that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

So if I don't ask according to His will, He doesn't hear me. Now that's not my statement. That's His. Now listen to this.

¹⁵And if we know that He hears us, we know that whatever we ask that we have the request that we've made from Him.

So according to this, if I pray as Paul says, according to the power within me, I pray led by the Holy Spirit in me. That leadership will give me a place where I will pray what God wants and He will then honor that always with a yes. That's why at the end of the book of Ephesians, look in chapter 6. Look with me in verse 18, chapter 6. He says:

¹⁸Through all prayer and requests, praying at all times

In other words, there's not a moment you don't do this. In the Spirit. That is exactly what he's saying here at the end of chapter 3. You're praying based on the power that is in you. You pray in the Spirit.

and under this you're sober-minded in all perseverance and request on behalf of the saints,
¹⁹and for me that a word might be given to me when I open my mouth, in boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel,

He says, at the end of the book, the very same thing he says at the end of chapter 3. That if you're going to have an effective prayer life, the kind of prayer life by the way where God goes beyond even what you pray or think in that prayer time, if you want that kind of response to your prayer life, then you've got to pray under the direction of the Holy Spirit of God. Now, now listen. Two things. You've got to know what He wants you to pray. And you have to pray it. It has to be both. One of my favorite stories in the Old Testament. 1 Kings. Ahab and Elijah meet. And Elijah looks at him and says, and Ahab's mouthing Elijah. So Elijah says, "Look, I'm worn out. You've got 450 prophets of Baal. I'm the only guy left. Let's just have a little contest. We'll have a little run. You get your 450 guys and meet me at Mt. Carmel." So they meet him and he's got not only 450 prophets, I love Israel. He's got all these Jews out here with them. And so he looks at the Jews and he says, "Alright let's decide today who we're going to serve: Jehovah or Baal." And the Bible says they were like this. No clue. They're not answering. So then Elijah says, "Alright I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll have a little contest. You build an altar; I'll build an altar. And what we'll do is we'll call, you call on Baal, I'll call on Jehovah and we'll see which one lights the fire and burns up the altar." And so these goofy Israelites go, "Whoop! Yeah! Great!" So they set up the altars, they get everything going, and so they start praying to Baal. Here's the problem with praying to Baal, OK. He's not there. So he doesn't hear you. So they keep praying and finally after about a couple of hours, they're getting tired. I love Elijah. He's just my sense of humor. He starts just, I don't know, mouthing them. So he starts mouthing them and he gives them all these things. And he says, "Look, maybe, maybe he's tired." I love this. At noon, Elijah mocked them, cry aloud, maybe, he's a god, maybe he's musing. He's thinking. Watching the Masters. My wife asked me last night, we're going out to eat, and I said, "It's The Masters. You're lucky I'm in church." So here we go. I love this, "Or he's relieving himself." That is what it means. "He's on a journey. Perhaps he's asleep and must be wakened." And they cried aloud and cut themselves and as mid-day passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation. I love this. But there was no voice. Because there's nobody there. So they finally finish. They're exhausted. They've cried all day. He's not answering. Elijah has them cover his altar in water. Now listen to this because here's the key.

³⁷Answer me, O Lord, answer me. That this people may know that You, O Lord, are God and that You have turned their hearts back. ³⁸Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench.

I love Israel. Here we go.

When all the people saw it, they said, "The Lord, He is God. The Lord, He is God."

You've got to love these people, right. But here's what I want you to understand. Two things. If he sets this contest up and it wasn't God's idea, does God answer his prayer? No. Now second thing. If he sets this contest up because God told him to, and he has them cry aloud and then he comes in front of his altar and he just stands there like this and utters nothing. Does the fire fall? No. There are two things that have to occur for his prayer to have the power to call fire down from heaven and burn up his altar with all the water and the stones, everything in it. The only way for that to occur is two things. He has to be doing this in response to what God said to him. And then, listen, he has to verbalize what God has told him to pray. So you've got to do two things in your

prayer life. You want it to go beyond even what you believe or think, then you've got to be sure you're praying what God says and you have to pray it. Listen to this. Stay where you are because we're coming back. But I want you to listen when it talks about the Holy Spirit praying for us and good things coming out. Listen to this.

²⁶Likewise, the Spirit Himself intercedes with our weakness when we don't know how to pray like we ought to. But the Spirit intercedes with unspeakable groanings,

Now listen.

²⁷The one who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit so the spirit, Holy Spirit in you is praying to your Father that Jesus made you connected to.

But listen to this

He knows what is the mind of the Spirit, why, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints based on God.

Even the Holy Spirit, for things to work in my life, two things have to happen. He has to verbalize inside me a prayer of unspeakable groaning. I don't hear it but He does. He verbalizes the prayer based on what the Father desires. Which is why then the very next verse is:

We know that all things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to purpose.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit in me has verbalized the will of the Father in my life. If that's how the Holy Spirit prays, that's how we're supposed to pray. Then understand, you have got to pray God's will. And if you do, then based on what we've seen in Bryan, based on what he says in Ephesians 3, He even goes beyond what He asks us to pray for.

So, you go into your closet, you've got your list, right. You really should have about 3 categories on it: friends, family, and beyond. Now when I look at beyond, I think you pray for those over you in the city, now listen, that you're really connected to. Some of you know the city manager in Bryan or the City Manager in College Station. If you do, then you take their name on your list. And what do you pray? Oh, we've already got one thing. 1 Timothy. I pray that this guy or gal will do a good enough job that it will bring, and this is what Paul prays for in 1 Timothy, that we will be able to live a quiet life, that things will be as civil as they can be, so that we can take the gospel to our community as easily as we can. So that's what you pray. Whoever you're connected to, your kids playing football, you pray for your football coach. Playing soccer, you pray for your soccer coach. You pray for those in authority in your life, that you're connected to, and you pray, "God give them the best decision that will bring civility in our community." Not so that we feel good, but so that it will make it easy to bring the gospel to that community we're praying in the middle of. So there's one clear prayer for your family. Boy if you're a mom or dad, what a perfect prayer right before this. He gives you two things: pray for the release of Jesus in life and pray that you're rooted in the love of God. Listen, what a great thing to pray for your kids. Your kid comes to Christ, he's 7-years-old, for the rest of his days, every day, you need to be breathing at

least that prayer, you know what God wants. He tells him to pray. There's the written word of God by the Spirit telling you what to pray so every single day you breathe your kids name to Jesus and say, "God let him learn, let her learn, how to release Jesus in his or her life and let their faith be absolutely rooted in the fact that no matter what happens, You love them." That they can't run past it. They can't sin out of it. Everybody they know is a part of it and is never going to end. God let them feel that in their soul. And what will He do? He'll go beyond what you pray. Because that's what He promises.

We've seen it here in Bryan. For my friends, what do I pray? I pray those things. But then when a friend calls me and says, "My wife's got cancer." What do you do? I think you get in your room and you sit down and before you utter a prayer, you ask God, because I think there are only two options here. You have 2 Corinthians 12 where Paul had a thorn in the flesh and he asked God three times and God said, "Sorry, I'm not healing you because through this, my power will be made more perfect in your weakness than it has been." And then there were times He did heal him. So when your friend calls you and says, "My wife has this." Then you sit down and when you finish praying for the city, you've prayed for your family, then you come to your friend, you've got this list, she's on your list, you sit down and say, "Alright, Father, let me know. Do I pray that You heal her or do I pray that Your power is perfected in what she's going through?" Those are your options. And if you pray under the leadership of the Spirit, so we know two things, right. We know we have written things from the Holy Spirit and there are times when He will verbally guide us in the proper prayer time. If we do that, and He goes beyond what we think, then if He tells me to pray for somebody, they're going to be healed. If He tells me to pray that His power is made more perfect in their weakness, then His power will be made more perfect in their weakness. That's what he says. We've lost that art. And that's why, look at the next phrase.

[²¹to Whom glory, listen, is in the church and in Christ and to all the generations of the ages of the ages. Amen.](#)

Now listen, we're like Baal and Elijah. We're the only people in America that are praying and know the true God personally. If our prayers were based exclusively on the will of the Father, taught to us through the written word and through the spoken word by the Spirit to our hearts, and He were to go beyond even what we pray or think, what would happen in Bryan/College Station? Our churches would have God's glory poured on them in a way that the community would say, "There's something happening there that isn't happening at Harry's." I do wonder, and I don't know that I totally have the answer to this, but I do wonder if the lack of civility in America today even between Christians, because I see it on Facebook, I wonder if it's because we don't believe Ephesians 3:20. And the staggering thing is we have a movie that proves that out. And then what happens? Jesus gets glory. Why does Jesus get glory? Because when people come and say, "Why do your prayers work? Our response is, "Because Jesus gave us access to the Creator of the universe. How did He do that? Easter. He died. Six hours on a cross. Took my sin. Three days later out of the grave because he died for my sin, not for His own. So we have a chance through our prayer life to bring glory to Jesus Christ. Sometimes it's fast. Right after I'd been called to preach, our youth choir went to Alabama for this camp. And so the last night of the camp, they said, "Those of you that have made a decision for Christ, we want you to come forward and stand by the deal." And so I went down and stood and another guy in our youth group, Bill Lee, came down and he stood over here. And Bill and I had sat up the night before and talked about where

he was in Christ and who he needed to be, and he'd gotten himself right. And so we're both standing down here and all through the service, we had like 51 or 52 kids that had come and 49 or so walked down the aisle. I mean it was incredible. But the best friend I had in life, David Gill, I never saw him walk the aisle and I knew he was in the group. But I had this weird urgency to pray for him. And so all through the thing I'm praying for him. I mean it's one of those, I guess the word is, I was compelled. So the service is over, David's not down there. I didn't see him. And I walk over to Bill and before he can even get anything out of his mouth, Bill goes, "I've got to tell you, man, this whole time I've been praying for David Gill." So we walked out the front of the church, opened the door, and David's standing there. Without batting an eye he looked at me and he said, "OK, I don't know Jesus. I need Him. I'm going to go up and y'all tell me how to find Him." Does it always work that quickly? No. Does it always work? Yes. And that is the key. I don't care how long it takes. We have a responsibility to our city, to our friends, and to our family. And gentlemen, you're the head of the home. You're the one that leads that in that.

Let's pray.

Father, I know I speak to myself today. As there are times particularly when I pray for those in leadership that I'm just not sure my prayer's getting anywhere and I make that confession. So Father thank You for Your word that nailed me this weak. And so, Father, I pray for all of us, and real simply, that as we leave this building today, You would do in every heart what You've done in mine. I ask You that in Jesus name.