



Glyfada Christian Center



02/02/2025

Preacher Brian van Deventer; Stavros Antoniadis

Series Prayer

Service Sunday Service

Passages Psalm 34:17; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Mark 11:24; Daniel 10; Luke 22:42;
Luke 18:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:6-7

Praying in Life's Toughest Moments

Pastor Brian – Welcome

1. Lord, You are all that we need. Lord, You are all that we need. Lord, we just pause for a moment. Lord, living in a world that is so crowded with noise. Lord, we hear the voices of our society. We hear the voices of our politicians. Lord, we hear the voices of our news people. We hear the voices of our neighbors. We hear the voices of our families. Lord, we see what's happening around us Lord. And it's so much noise. So much Lord, that grabs our attention. But Lord, this morning, we declare that our eyes are fixed on You. Lord, our attention is given to You. Holy Spirit, we are here, to hear from You. And so, Lord, we just stop and remind ourselves of this today, that there is no influence, that is more significant, that is more important, or that is more truthful than You. So, Lord, we open our ears, we

open our hearts, and we declare that from beginning to end that it is about You. In Jesus' name.

Pastor Brian- Prayer

1. Lord, we just welcome You into this house again today. We are here for You. So, Lord, I pray You would focus our hearts, Lord. Lord, zone our minds in on You today. Lord, let Your love just flow over us, and our love for You, flow out from us. Lord, we declare our everlasting love for You. Just take a moment and let that rest on your heart. We have an audience of One, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Brian- Announcements

1. Well, as much as I hate to declare it, there's a lot of sickness going around today. It takes a lot to keep pastor Gail in her bed, and away from church. But please pray for her, she's had a really hard couple of days, and we have a number of families where that just seems to keep swirling around. But sickness does not own us. Let God's people say, Amen. We know someone who is healer, provider, caretaker, and He is able to bring us out of this, in Jesus' name.

2. It's good to see Anton up and around. The Lord and Leto's soup has helped him. We want to remember Rau and Kitty. She's still recovering from surgery. Michael Witt and his family, they were well enough to go away for the weekend. But then, I talked to them on Saturday, where they were at, and they said that the little one was kind of getting sick again. So, please pray for them. And I can't remember everybody else.

3. I talked to Chris Kehayas yesterday, and we're still believing for his sleep patterns to recover. He told me that he's not sleeping more than about 2 hours a night, which obviously leaves him exhausted throughout the day. But I know a peace giver who can bring peace to that body and can help him sleep. Mary has been at the doctor with some high blood pressure issues. And she continues to recover from her surgeries. And although she's not here with us, still family. Martha in Cyprus is struggling through some things.

4. And sometimes it seems like all we talk about around here is healing. But I will tell you this, we will talk about it, pray about it, until we see people healed. Amen! I had a few good weeks, and then the last couple of days, my bronchial tubes were just a mess again. Maybe because the weather in Greece does not know how to behave, but whatever it is, I declare health in Jesus' name. Amen. I fact, put your hand on yourself somewhere and say that for you. This winter is not going to get a hold on you! Health in Jesus' name. Amen.

5. Well, I don't have a lot of announcements for you today. God's people said Amen. We do have the care group leaders and host meeting on Wednesday night, and prayer before that at 19:00. We would love to see everybody here. We believe that this is the year of prayer. Other than that, I don't think I have any announcements. Oh, yes, sorry. Tuesdays to Fridays we do have the 10:00 prayer here in the sanctuary. You are welcome to come for a little time or a long time. If you want to stay all day, we'll leave it open for you. But we're starting

the day with prayer at 10:00 here in the church. And I've had testimonies that it's been such a blessing.

6. Pastor Gail and I have been talking for some months now, we don't know what to do but pray. I don't know how to fix my life or your life, or anybody else's life. I don't know how to answer any of the needs, and there are many among us. I don't know how to see our families and our neighbors come to the Lord. We just don't know. But we know the One who does. Please join us in asking the One who knows, both to share His will and wisdom with us, and in all of our lives to do that which we cannot do. Amen.

7. Do you know Him, and do you know that it's true? Then declare it day-by-day all day long. Amen.

For the rest of the announcements, go to the video.

Pastor Brian- main message

1. We're continuing to talk about prayer. I hope that through these weeks, that this subject is settling into you. We all know about prayer. Every church that has ever existed has talked about prayer. We've been through many sermons and sermon series about prayer. And I don't know if it's different for you this time or not, but our prayer is simple this: that the reality of what it means to have a prayerful life, would become more significant to you than it ever has before.

2. In the same way, that sometimes we read a Scripture, maybe I've read it 100 times before, but all of a sudden, I read it, and a light goes on. And it speaks to me in a different way to me than before. That's what we're praying will happen with this series. I don't necessarily expect that you'll hear anything new. But you might hear something fresh. You might hear something that comes to you in a different way. Because we do believe that only prayer will answer anything.

3. Today, I get to talk to you about praying in life's toughest moments. In some way, that's the easiest time to pray. Everybody prays when they're in trouble. Like they say in the armies, 'There are no atheists in a foxhole.' (The hole that you hide in, when the bombs are falling, and the bullets are flying.) It's an easy time to pray.

4. Sometimes though, it's hard to pray, in the struggles. Maybe part of it is personality. When I'm upset, or I'm afraid, I'm bothered, I'm angry, I know I should pray. But I often have to make myself pray. If you make me mad, Stavro, I don't necessarily want to pray for you or me. I might pray against you, but it's hard for me to pray. When my emotions are caught up, sometimes it's hard, and life, in case you haven't noticed, is full of challenges.

5. Have you ever just found yourself in that spot, so deep, that you couldn't see the light and didn't know if you could again. Financial struggles, health crisis, broken relationships, overwhelming grief, well that's happy, isn't it?

6. But as believers, we have this weapon that can sustain us through it all. Prayer is not just a routine act. As we say, it's our direct line of communication with God. It is a real source of

strength. It is a real source of comfort, and it is a real source of guidance. So, let us consider today about praying through the toughest moments. I'm going to give you 5 points:

a. The first one is this. You can cry out to God in desperation. You can just cry out to God. And this can be powerful. Consider what David wrote in Psalm 34:17, "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles." When we're overwhelmed, we have the tendency to believe that no one understands our pain. No one has ever felt like I do now. But God understands every bit of it. Do you remember Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, she was praying so hard to have a child, her heart was in anguish. But she poured out her soul before the Lord, and He heard her. It's just one example. But God wants to hear your pain when you are in pain. In times of desperation, and I want to say this especially to the men in the room, God does not ask you to hold back your emotions. If He didn't want you to feel it, He wouldn't have created it in you. We're made to feel the highs and the lows. Some of us more than others. I was reading something that came across my Instagram, you know how they put those t-shirts and other things according to your age, and one came across and said, 'Generation-X, 1965-1980, we feel nothing.' It's a generation which just kind of moves along in small waves; no highs and lows. How many of you have ever watch the show, the Simpsons. You know that show. One of my favorite episodes, was when Bart, the little boy, he said. 'We're the X-generation, we feel neither highs nor lows.' And the other person asks him, 'How does that make you feel?' 'Eh.' But we are made to feel. And I don't think that God is asking us to always be at the height of our emotions, but when there are times of desperation, He would rather you cry out to Him, than cry out to another. He hears your pain. He feels your pain, and He reaches out to your pain. And maybe, nobody in this room needs to hear it, but in your times of desperation, cry out to God. Put your focus, put your emotion, put your attention on Him. He is big enough to handle it. Your grief, your anger, your questions, God is big enough to take it on. But you have to utilize the opportunity. Too many people cry out to everything and everyone, but God. And He is the One with the potential to answer it. So, number one, tough times – cry out to God in desperation. Amen.

b. Number two. Pray in faith, even when it's hard. I'm a skeptical person. It's easy for me to doubt. I do not have to exercise that muscle at all – easy. Tell me something and I can doubt it like that. And when things get hard, and it's easy for doubt to creep in, I may begin to wonder if God is listening or if He even cares. Am I the only one who has ever felt that way? But faith, faith can be an anchor in the storm. Mark 11:24, says this, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." When your prayers become aligned with the Spirit of God, which is one of the things, prayer does. How many of you know that when you pray, one of the things God wants for you, it's going to happen. You pray, you believe. One of my first prayers is always, 'Lord, give me the desires of my heart, meaning put the desires You want, in me.' Because I know that God wants to do all of those good things. Faith also allows us to understand, that if we don't see the answer right now, that doesn't mean that the answer is not there. Remember when Daniel prayed, he prayed for 21 days, consistently. Finally, an angel appears to him in Daniel 10, he said, 'From the day you prayed, I was sent to answer, but I was held by something.' Sometimes your prayers have already been answered, it just hasn't been revealed yet. Sometimes there is spiritual operation keeping you from your answer. Sometimes, it's just

not yet time for you to know. Because, if you're like me, and you get your answer too early, you might act too fast, and then you go back to redo what you shouldn't have done in the first place. God knows what you need when you need it. Let that word sink in. He knows what you need when you need it, how you need it, how it should be delivered, how your answer should come. God is wise in His ways. As one man said, 'God has a plan, and His plan works.' It might have been me that said that.

c. Number three. With that faith that you have, we're talking about tough times here, in your tough times, surrender to God's will. It is so difficult sometimes, so crucial sometimes, but isn't this exactly what Jesus taught us in the garden, when He prayed for Himself. Luke 22:42, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." I want somebody to hear this today. Surrender does not mean giving up. Some people have a mentality like that. Surrender doesn't mean that you're giving up. It means trusting in the fact that God's plan is better than yours. His ways are different, but they are always higher. Got that. God's ways are different, but they are always higher. And if you demand your way, you're insisting on something that does not measure up. God's way for you is better. Oh, you don't know how much I need this, how much I wish that. I probably don't. But He does! And He knows if that meets His expectations for you, or if there is something higher. I want you to tell yourself something. God is never taking me on a downward road. His work in your life, is not to lower you. You might have to pass through something. But His work is always higher. Amen.

d. Number four. In tough times. In tough times find strength through persistent prayer. Last week I talked about when I grew up in church, we had a saying, 'We would pray until we prayed through.' We told each other, that it was not allowable to stop praying, until you got through it, until you were done with it. Now, I'm not naïve enough to believe that's always possible. But I do believe that's a good principle. Pray and keep praying. You remember the widow who went before the judge. Luke 18:1-8 the judge didn't want to answer her, so she kept going every day, knocking on that door, 'You will give me an answer. I'm here, I need an answer.' You know at the end of that passage, Jesus asks the question, "However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" If Jesus were to come today, could we tell Him, that we kept our prayers going, or would we have to tell Him, 'We stopped praying. No Lord, I just gave up on that one. I gave up praying for that person. I gave up praying for that need. It was too much for too long so I just stopped.' In tough times, pray and keep praying. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." So, there you go, for anybody who's ever asked, 'What is God's will for my life?' The answer is, pray. Pray. Pray until other things are revealed. Pray until other things happen. Pray until the road opens up. Or pray until it finally closes. Pray continually. For this is God's will in Christ Jesus. The enemy wants us to stop praying. Listen to me. I'm going to make it personal. The enemy wants you to stop praying. Because he knows the power of a believer who will not give up. He wants you to stop praying. Because He knows what's on the other side of that answered prayer. Keep praying; keep believing; keep trusting. And if you did it again, do it again, again. And again, again.

e. Number five. I love this one. In tough times. I prayed through this one yesterday as I was preparing. Experience God's peace, through prayer. Have you ever been told by somebody

that, I have, your faith or your prayers were just like a crutch. Number one, I do not believe that; it's not a crutch, it's a weapon. But even if sometimes it is a crutch, I sure am glad that I have a Savior to hold me up. I don't want to experience life without that. Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Those of you who were here last week, might notice that I'm using this Scripture again. This has been my Scripture for the week. Because of verse seven. "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Those of you that grew up in church, you probably remember this quote, 'Prayer changes things.' Anybody heard that one? I used to have bookmarks and all sorts of things, 'Prayer changes things.' And that's true. But that doesn't always mean that it changes the circumstances. Sometimes, Cielo, it just changes me. But I'm a thing too. Prayer changes things. It changes perspectives. It changes the way we feel things. It changes the way we meet those things. Sometimes it changes expectations. One of the things I hate most in life, is unmet expectations. And sometimes I just need the Holy Spirit to redirect my perspective. Because when I allow that to happen, you know what happens, the peace of God, the peace of God, fills me, reminds me I'm not alone, it reminds me that I don't have to be in charge of all my own stuff, reminds me that I don't have to be the answer to my own prayers. If I don't make this happen, oh, I'm guilty of that, if I don't make this happen, it won't happen. I hate to tell myself, but if God wants it to happen, it will anyway. He might have to move me out of the way to make it have, but it will happen. So, Chrissy, I don't have to be the answer to my own prayers. Thank God for that. And when I can bring myself in line with that Scripture, hmm, the peace of God.

7. Cry out to God in desperation. And hold on to your faith in that process. Surrender to God's will. Pray persistently. And experience His peace. I'll leave you with thought. I'm reading this sentence that I wrote and I like it. Praying through the toughest moments, is not about having perfect words. Now listen, I'm talking about prayer here. God's not looking for your perfect words, but it's coming before God with a sincere heart.

8. No matter what you're facing today, and I don't say this lightly. I know there are some big needs, in this room right now. No matter what you're facing today, do not stop praying. God is near to the broken hearted. I think I need to say that again. God is near to the broken hearted. And He will carry us through.

9. Keep pressing in. Keep praying through. Keep believing. And know, and know, is that a strong enough word. I don't want to 'think', I don't even want 'believe'. 'Know' that God's grace is sufficient for you. It matters not what it is, no matter what the tough time is. Whether it's the lack of something, whether it's unmet desires, unmet expectations. I'm going even say this, even if it has been persistent sin in your life, I want you to know today, through prayer, through understanding who your God is, His grace is sufficient to overcome everything.

10. I have a couple of big questions that I have to have answered in the next couple of weeks. And God, I confess before You, Your grace is sufficient for me. For each one of you making a decision right now, His grace is sufficient for you. Turn your eyes on Him. And pray, and pray and pray again. His answer is there. Because that's what He promised. And that's

who He is. In the tough moments, stand with Him, because He stands with you. In Jesus' name.

11. Would just bow your heads today. I'm going to give us just a moment or two here, because I want the Holy Spirit to speak to you. What is that thing that stands in front of you today, and challenges you, makes you doubt, makes you hurt, frustrates your life?

12. Lord Jesus, we lift these things up to you today. Because we confess again. There is no strength within us, except that which is given by You. So, Lord we speak to these things this morning. Lord, whatever challenges they might be, we say that in the name of Jesus, they must submit to You. This mountain must be moved because of You. This relationship shall be fixed because of You. This healing shall be done because of You. This hope will be given because of You. And Lord, I pray this morning, for each and everyone of us, that we would be taken by a spirit of prayer, that does not allow any situation into our lives without us turning it to You. Lord, settle on us with a spirit of prayer. Lord, anoint our homes with a spirit of prayer. Take us into our jobs and into the other places that we encounter Lord, with a spirit of prayer. So that Lord, we may experience Your answers, and we may experience Your peace. Because we believe for that, in Jesus' name. And we bless You because of it.

13. Now, just receive His work into your life. Amen. Now everybody, look up at me. Part of that Scripture said this, "Rejoice in everything, your God is with you", so rejoice today. Go from here with joy in your heart, that is placed there by the Spirit of God. He is with you. He is for you. He loves you. And He walks with you. You live in the power of the Spirit of God. So, go from here rejoicing, in Jesus' name. Amen.