



Message **Transcript**

Powerful Prayer

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Pastor Jeff:

"Lord Jesus, we gather before you. We just thank you for this season that we've had just in your presence every single day waking up with a full worship team, worshipping your name, seeking your faith, setting aside food for the glory of your name, and falling more in love with you, Lord. We thank you for the privilege that you draw us near, and anyone that comes to you, you will never turn away. Lord, may we become a house of prayer, may we be known as a church that seeks your face, and may everyone who knows how to seek your face fall more and more in love with you. And Lord, now we're going to hear from your living and active word, and Lord, we're excited about it, because we know that every time that you're living and active word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you speak, you speak to every single person who's ready to hear. And so our prayer this morning is speak, Lord, for we want to hear what you have to say."

And so now for all those who have gathered who desire to hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak directly to you, who will believe what he tells you and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word, Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

Amen. This morning I want to talk to you about what you must do to experience

more powerful prayers. Have you ever noticed that when you pray, the more you pray, you wish, "I wish I could pray more powerfully. I wish God could hear that."

I mean, we see stories in the Bible of Elijah when he was standing by the prophets of Baal, calling down fire through his one simple prayer. And sometimes we say, "I wish when I face opposition like that, I could call down fire like that." Or we see David when he's getting ready to square off with Goliath, he says, "I don't come at you with javelin sticks or stones. I'm coming at you in the name of the Lord Almighty, and he's the one who's going to deliver me today. He's the one that's going to show you."

Or even Jesus when he was facing the cross all by himself for the glory of his father and for what he was prompted to do, "Not my will, but yours be done," went and endured that, and he prayed, and here's how he prayed. Before he went to the cross, he prayed for those disciples and all future disciples that they be his witnesses in the world. And here some 2000 years later, we are still witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ, his prayer was heard. How can we pray powerful prayers like that, that not only affect us but the next generation?

I find that the longer I pray, I prayed since I was a young boy. I've been a Christian since I was 18, so nearly 34 or 35 years I've been praying. But the more I pray, the more I realize I feel like I'm dipping my toe into an ocean that I know nothing about. The more I pray, the more I realize there's a depth to prayer that I haven't experienced. And yet when I read through the prayers of God's people all in the Bible, I'm like, "I want to know how to pray like that. I want my prayers to have power like

that. When we're praying for the loss and we're praying for healing, we're praying for deliverance, I want to see my prayers answered like that." And I know you do too.

And if you've ever been asking the Lord, "How can I pray with more power?" The Lord has a word for you today. The Lord wants to show you what needs to align, what needs to be present in your life so that you can have access to the power that you want to have for your prayers. And to do that this morning, we're going to be in 2 Chronicles 20. 2 Chronicles 20, it's in your Old Testament. It comes right after 1 Chronicles, in case you're wondering. 2 Chronicles 20, we're going to read about a king named King Jehoshaphat. He was one of the kings of the southern tribe of Judah. He was one of the good kings. There weren't many. He was one of about six that were somewhat good. The northern kingdom of Israel had no good kings whatsoever, so if you're ever quizzed on a test and say, "How many good kings were there in the north," just say zero because there weren't any.

But Jehoshaphat was a good king. He didn't consult with the Baals, the false gods of their day. He devoted himself to the Lord. The Bible says, "The Lord was with him." He removed the Asherah poles in his day that people were dedicating themselves to, and he sent men around the nation to teach the law of the Lord. So he did many good things. He's considered a one of the good kings.

Now, his son after him, Jehoram, didn't do so well. He started his reign by killing all his brothers, marrying Ahab's daughter, and making an alignment with evil Israel. I mean, that's what he did. So, we realized it didn't shift from that generation. But Jehoshaphat, although unfortunately named, was a good king. And we're going to read

about his story here, and I'm going to highlight seven truths about powerful prayer and what needs to align in order for you to experience the power of God in your prayer. So it's not just you talking to God, but it's you experiencing God through your prayer.

Now, before I begin this message, I got to let you know the only way to talk to God is through the person of Jesus Christ.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

1 Timothy 2:5 says, "There's one mediator between God and man, and it's the man Jesus Christ." You don't go through priests or pastors or saints or ancestors or people who have died. You go through Jesus. He's the only access to the Father. He is the way, the truth, and the life. And the only way you have access to him is by believing that he is God.

Congregation:

That's right.

Pastor Jeff:

Jesus Christ came to this world. He died on the cross for all your sins, he was buried in the grave, he rose from the dead, and he offers life to anyone who repented their sin and place their complete faith and trust in him.

And if you have a relationship with Jesus, you can pray with Jesus, you can talk

to Jesus. He wants to talk to you. He already knows everything about you, you can learn all that you can about him. And that's where we start, but now we're in the Old Testament passage, and we're reading about King Jehoshaphat and what was going on in Judah at that time. And we're going to talk about seven powerful occurrences that happen so that we can experience God in prayer, notice what it says.

Now, it came about after this that the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon, together with some of the Meunites, came to make war against Jehoshaphat. Here's what you need to know. We could put up graphs, you can study your Bible, you can look at all these nations coming against them and what side of the Dead Sea they were on and all this. Here's what you need to know. There were three powerful nations coming against the nation of Judah. That's what was going on. They were overmanned, they were outnumbered, and it was terrifying for them. That's what you need to know in order for you to understand this story. That's where it begins, okay?

And this is what happens, and notice how King Jehoshaphat responds. They came and reported to Jehoshaphat saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea out of Ammon. And behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar, that is En-gedi." So they're in En-gedi, these three military units are encamped, getting ready to come after Judah.

Now, here's what you need to understand about powerful prayer. "Powerful prayer occurs when we experience opposition that is overwhelming." Let me say it again, "Powerful prayer occurs, and really only occurs, when you experience opposition that is overwhelming."

Now, for many of us, we want powerful prayer, and we want to pray for others for powerful prayer, but God loves you so much that oftentimes he designs in your life circumstances for you personally and corporately in your family or in your church that are overwhelming. And when you're in those circumstances, that's an opportunity for you to experience powerful answers to prayer. Because if the circumstances weren't overwhelming, there wouldn't be any need for powerful prayer. If you have enough stored up today to eat, and you ask the Lord, "Lord, provide for me enough to eat," but it's already there for you, it doesn't take powerful prayer to answer that prayer. But if you have no food, and you're asking the Lord, "I need food," and you have no resources, and you're asking the Lord for food, when the Lord provides food, it's a powerful answer to prayer.

So understand this. Oftentimes, we want to see powerful prayer. We just don't want to see overwhelming circumstances in our lives. And if you've lived long enough, you will see them. And if you haven't seen them, just keep breathing, you will. God has a way of loving you enough to bring circumstances into your life that are overwhelming or devastating or deflating to you. These cards here, I put them on the stool today just because I wanted you to see them. I mean, these are the cards just from Inglewood alone, and I know in Colorado Springs and I know in Westminster, there were scores of other cards. And I share them to you for this reason. I mean, each card here weighs only about an ounce, but each card here comes with a massive amount of weight.

I mean, if you think about prodigals. I mean, I don't know how many cards I read

and prayed for people with prodigals and you say, "Oh, it's a prodigal, and we're praying that God will bring them home. And God loves the prodigals, and we pray for the prodigals." But if you're a parent and you love your son or daughter, which all parents do, and you've raised your kids in the ways of the Lord, and they're out somewhere on the back 40 doing whatever with whoever and however that goes against everything that you taught them, it comes with a massive weight on your chest, and you begin to wonder, "Did I do something wrong, or could we have done something different, or why is this happening to us? And how come our other children seem to be getting it right? And what do we do? We can't make them do anything anymore. We have no authority in their life. They can do whatever they want, and we're grieved. And every time we talk to them, they're mad at us."

That's just one card with one name. It's massive weight, but it's when the circumstances are overwhelming like that, that we have an opportunity to see God do overwhelming work. And it's not just prodigals. I mean, I read about marriages on these cards. I mean, everybody's marriage is perfect until they get married. Nobody writes the card before they get married, unless it's, "Bless our marriage, because we got it all figured out." It's after they get married, the card starts coming. "Why is our marriage so hard? Why is it so difficult for us? How come this isn't working for us? Everybody else I see at church, they have their arms around each other, and they are all happy all the time. They don't have any problems in their marriage," and that's a lie. It just means they had cards earlier that you never saw. That's all it means, right?

And it's not just that. It's our kids or it's our health. It's usually when our health

goes bad or there's something super acute that we can't control or take care of, the cards start flowing in. Or our finances, when we don't have enough money at the end of the month to meet our bills or a trauma or a turmoil, or I don't know how many cards we're just about, "Lord, give me wisdom. Should I get married? Should I not get married? Should we start dating? Should we not? Should I take this job? Should I not take this job? Should we buy this house? Should we not buy this house? Should we move? Should we not move? Like Lord, help. I don't know what to do." That's where prayer comes in, and the more overwhelming it is, the more opportunity for God to do something great.

And here's the problem. When it's overwhelming, oftentimes we get paralyzed. We get paralyzed. "I don't know what to do. Where's God? And if God's so good, then how come I'm having to go through this? And if God's so good, why am I enduring this? And how come I'm the only one that has to deal with this? How come I'm the only one whose spouse isn't a believer? How come I'm the only one who miscarried? And how come I'm the only one who..." And we go on and on. You're not the only one, first of all, and second of all, it's because God loves you so much, he wants to answer prayers powerfully. When you're overwhelmed, it's an opportunity for God to work. And so when you're overwhelmed, just thank him, thank him. "Lord, I thank you so much that you love me that you think I can handle this, but boy is this hard. Boy is this hard."

If we're going to see powerful prayers at work, we're going to need to have massive opposition. The reason we love the story about Elijah and the prophets of

Baals, there's 450 to 1, and Elijah wins. The reason we love David and Goliath is because Goliath's almost 10 feet tall, and David's a shepherd boy. The reason we love the cross is because the cross signifies the death of sin that no one else could ever pay except Christ. "Please go to the cross, please endure all this on our behalf, because if you don't, we have no hope."

How come it is that when we experience opposition that's overwhelming, we get paralyzed rather than seek the face of the Lord? Powerful prayer occurs when we experience opposition that's overwhelming, when it seems impossible, when it seems insurmountable, when it seems we can't. We don't have an answer for this one. Nobody knows. We've been to all the doctors, we've been to all the marriage counselors, I've been to all the financial people. They don't have answers. That's when God has a chance to go to work. That's number one.

Point number two is powerful prayer occurs when we habitually respond with prayer and fasting. When we habitually respond with prayer and fasting, notice this, these great multitude has come against Jehoshaphat and the nation of Judah, and Jehoshaphat is going to get the news, and notice what it says, "Jehoshaphat was afraid." He was in fear. Is it okay to be afraid? Yes. Is it okay to have emotions of terror? Absolutely. Is it okay when you see someone go in the hospital, you don't think's going to make it to be fearful? Yes. Is it okay when the doctor says, "This doesn't look good." Is it okay to be fear? Yes, it is.

Sometimes, we can't even control our emotions. They just spur up inside of us

like, "I'm terrified." But notice what he does. Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the Lord, "I'm afraid, so I'm going after the Lord. I'm afraid, so I'm going to him. It's not I'm afraid, so I'm going to another Christian, or I'm afraid, and I'm going to an expert. I'm afraid, so I'm going to God." It's the habitual response that we must have.

And notice what else he does as a leader. "And he proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." So Judah gathered together to seek help from the Lord. They even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the Lord. Jehoshaphat's the king, he's the leader. He's terrified, he knows he's in trouble, and here's what he does. He does one of the most Godly, honoring, strong things he could ever do. He's terrified, so he seeks the Lord, and he calls the whole nation to do the same. He calls a fast. He tells the nation, "I don't have the answers, but I know God does." He tells the nation, "We all need to come together and believe in our God for him to do something good, because if we don't, our nation's going to get destroyed. We're outnumbered, we're outmanned. It's not looking good."

Do you know in the history of our nation, there have been several times where presidents have called a national day of prayer and humiliation or a national day of prayer and fasting? You can read Abraham Lincoln did it four times, and you can see the results in his presidency as the nation gathered as a nation, sought the face of the Lord, told God to do what he wanted to do, and then see what happened in our nation after that. It's absolutely amazing. If our political leaders would understand one thing, they answer to the Lord. Whether they realize it or not, they answer to Jesus for every

decision they ever make.

King Jehoshaphat says, "I know that, and I know we're in trouble, so I'm calling people from all over the nation," and guess who came? People from every single city came to do what? To gather, to gather to pray. Yes, you can pray alone. Yes, God can hear you alone, but there's something about coming together where the power of God is even stronger. I love to pray by myself. Prayer is personal, it's private. There's times I love to pray alone. I do. There's times God speaks directly to me. But if you are an individual private prayer that's personal, there is something in you that wants to get around other people that do the same, because it's energizing. It's like what we do for the weekend services here. We worship, we sing praise. I love to sing praise to the Lord, in my car alone.

I love to sing praise to the Lord in my devotion time alone. I don't want to sing in front of you, but I like gathering with you to sing with you, because when I'm around a group of people that have been worshipping the Lord all week, I love getting around a group of people that have been worshipping the Lord all week, because it renews my spirit. See, here's the part that we need to understand, that we need to habitually respond with prayer and fasting. It shouldn't just be, "Well, things are bad. We should pray about that."

You see in King Jehoshaphat's life, this wasn't the first time he'd ever prayed or fasted. It's ongoing in his life. I mean, do you remember when Jesus healed that young boy that his disciples couldn't heal? The father brought, he said, "I brought him to your disciples. They couldn't do anything." And Jesus said, "Bring the boy to me," and Jesus

heals the boy. It was later when they were in private, the disciples asked Jesus, "How come we couldn't drive it out?" And what does Jesus say? He said, "Because this kind only comes out by prayer and fasting." And what he was telling them wasn't, "Hey, when the father brought the boy, you probably should have started praying or you probably should have fasted a meal." What he was saying is you need to have an ongoing posture of being in such relationship with God through prayer and fasting that when difficult circumstances come your way, you have the power on the inside to do what God's calling you to do.

So there's an ongoing habitual response in your daily life and in your ongoing life to pray and seek the Lord and when necessary to fast so you can hear him clearly. That's why we don't see enough powerful prayer. When was the last time outside of this last 21 days you've seen anybody call you together for prayer and fasting, and says, "That's the most important thing that you can ever do." I know in my life that hasn't been many people that have done that. But the reality is Godly leaders pray and fast and call people to do the same. Godly pastors pray and fast and call their congregations to do the same. Godly parents pray and fast and call their children to do the same. Godly teachers pray and fast and call their students to do the same. You get it? Godly coaches pray and fast, call their players to do the same.

I mean, if you're a Godly person, prayer and fasting should be ongoing in your life, and people should say, "What's different about them?" Well, I can tell that they spent time in the presence of the Lord. That's what it is. That's what Hezekiah was

doing, and he was saying it was necessary, and so everybody's coming from all around. Because much like David said in Psalm 27:8, when he said, "Seek my face, my heart said to you, oh Lord, I shall seek your face. That's what I desire." Or the Psalmist said in Psalm 84, "Better it's one day in your house than a thousand elsewhere." No place I'd rather be.

So if we're going to experience powerful prayer, it occurs when we experience opposition that's overwhelming. So when you have overwhelming opposition in your life personally, when the odds are against you, when it doesn't look good, and the doctor says, "There's no way," and then you're not going to have the finances and you don't have the health, and this isn't going to work out for you corporately, that's the time where God's like, "I can if you habitually respond with prayer and fasting."

The third is this, powerful prayer occurs when we honor the Lord in his house, when we honor the Lord in his house. Just to remind us, Jesus said, "My father's house or my house shall be called what? A house of?"

Congregation:

Prayer.

Pastor Jeff:

Okay, let's say it again. Jesus said, my house shall be called a house of...

Congregation:

Prayer.

Pastor Jeff:

What is it?

Congregation:

Prayer.

Pastor Jeff:

What?

Congregation:

Prayer.

Pastor Jeff:

Prayer. If there's any ministry should be going on in the church is prayer. If there's no prayer, there's no ongoing presence of the Lord, we should be known by our prayer. Notice what Jehoshaphat does in verse 5, then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem. So he's standing before the entire nation and what's he doing? Where's he standing? In the house of the Lord before the new court. Where's he go? Where's he go? He goes to the temple. Where should we be going now? To the church.

The church is the most important institution. It's what Jesus Christ said he was going to establish and did in the Book of Acts, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Why? Because in the church is ongoing prayer, which means in the church is the presence of the Lord, which means in the church is how

God answers everything for the culture. So where's Jehoshaphat go? Jehoshaphat goes to the temple. He's going to honor the Lord. He's going to realize no matter what his vocational calling and his is calling is king, yours maybe is teacher or coach or student or attorney or housewife or dad or whatever your calling is, you're going to get into the house of the Lord because that's where it's important. That's where it's important to give instructions.

And notice what he does, he honors the Lord's character. He said, "Oh Lord, the God of our fathers, are you not the God in the heavens? Are you not the ruler over the kingdoms of all the nations, power and might are in your hand so that no one can stand against you? Lord, aren't you the God of all the nations? Aren't you the God in the heavens? Don't you rule over all the kingdoms? Who's stronger than you, who has more power than you? Who could stand against you? Lord, you have all the power." Do you know the Lord loves it when we honor him? Yeah, the Lord loves it when we tell him how great he is, and how awesome he is, and how wonderful he is, and how he's unlike any other being ever created. And how perfect he is and holy he is and righteous he is, and how good he is.

He doesn't get tired of hearing that because he already knows it. He's perfect in every way, and Hezekiah goes in and says, he starts telling the Lord who he is. And by telling the Lord who he is, he's losing his fear because he's fearful of these strong nations, but he's talking to the one that controls them all. There's nothing that will come upon you individually or us collectively ever that God's not sovereign or more powerful than. Isn't that good to know? Nothing. Nothing. And so he begins to honor the Lord's

character, and this is who you are and I love you Lord. And then he gives a history of the things that God has done. He says this in verse 7, "Did you not, O our God drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham your friend forever? You have lived in it and have built you a sanctuary there for your name."

We've built you a sanctuary for your name, and he's going to say what he's saying here in just a second. He's like, "Lord, you've done all this." Now why is this important? Because we need to remember the things that God has done because otherwise we'll forget. I mean, think about a time that you prayed desperately for God to move or God to do something in your life and he's answered it and you're thankful and then you move on, and the next time you're asking God for this, you forget about that and you move on. Have you ever taken the time just to sit down and say, "God, I just want to thank you for some of the prayers that you've answered in my life that I've kind of forgotten about."

You will come up with a list that is so, so long you will get your hand worn out writing them, because we take everything for granted. We take for granted that we have lungs. We take for granted that oxygen has been provided for us all day long. We take for granted that God gives moisture to our eyes to blink every six seconds so we can see. We take for granted that our heart continues to beat when we're not thinking about it. We take for granted that our brains are still working and keeping everything going. There's all sorts of things we can thank God about, let alone the little things. Think about any blessing in your life if you have a job, if you have resource, you have

money, you have a family as an individual, as a single, God's been doing blessing in your life through relationships.

Every good and perfect gift comes from who? God. He's been answering more prayers than you've even prayed in your life. And the problem is if we don't remember that, we'll start seeing God wrongly. We'll start begging God to do something because like, "Well, what have you done for me lately? You better do this. Versus, God, you have answered so many prayers that if you never did anything else for me, ever for my entire life, I just want to say thanks because you're good, and your history and your track record in my life and the life of people I know is good, and there's never been anything that you haven't done that's good. Thank you Jesus," right?

That's the posture. He's honoring God in the house of the Lord. He's given a history for all that God's done. He's got a perfect resume and then he goes to the word. He goes to the word, if you have time this week, you can go back to Second Chronicles, the same book in Chapter 6 starting in verse 28, and you can see that when Solomon dedicated the temple, he gave them the word of the Lord and the promise that when things came upon them, that they could call upon the Lord.

And that's exactly what King Jehoshaphat here is going to call upon right now. Look at verse 9. "Should evil come upon us, the sword or judgment or pestilence or famine, we will stand before this house and before you for your name that your reputation is in this house and cry to you in our distress and you will hear and deliver us." What's he saying? He's saying, "God, here's what your word says, and we're

holding you to your word. You told us when things were insurmountable. You told us when things were impossible. You told us when things were overwhelming to come here, and for your reputation to tell you about how good you are about all the things you've done, and to spell out for you perfectly what we need, and you're going to hear and you're going to listen because that's what you do, because you promised."

You promised. God loves it when we hold him to his word. Any of your children ever say anything like this to you over time? "Well, dad, you promised. Dad, you said we were going to do this. Hey dad, you promised we could go there. Hey dad, you said, dad, you said." And we as dads, we don't have a perfect track record of holding to our word, but our Father does, perfect track record. "Lord, you said this right here in your word. I'm reading it back to you. Therefore, I'm believing it and I'm holding you to it because you said it. I'm calling you." God loves it when we do that.

That's why Satan doesn't want you spending any time in the word of the Lord. He doesn't want you to know it because there's so many promises that are there that you can tell the Lord, "I'm in distress. I'm hurting. I'm here. I'm there. I need you to take away my anxiety. I need you to take away my fear. I need you to provide for me financially. I need you to take care of my health. God, I'm putting it all in your hands, because these are the verses that promise that you'll do that, giving it to you." I'm just telling you. That's when we begin to see powerful prayer. When it starts with the, "Lord, our Father who art in heaven. How will it be your name. Holy are you. You're in heaven. Now, you let your kingdom come, you let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." I want to honor you that way, and that's how we begin to experience powerful

prayer. When we experience opposition that's overwhelming and we habitually respond with prayer and fasting, and then we honor the Lord in his house.

Make no mistake about it. There's a difference between Christians who say, "I'm born again. I've repented and believed in Christ, but I'm never going to church," versus Christians that say, "I've repented and believed in Christ, and I'm going to be part of the family of God." There's a difference in terms of strength. There's a difference in terms of commitment. There's a difference in terms of identity. There's a difference in terms of mission. There's a difference in terms of intimacy. There's a difference in terms of God's favor on your life. There's all sorts of differences. When I meet Christians who say, "I don't go to church, I am the church." I'm like, "Well, you could be the church better if you actually went," because it's the visible manifestation. I mean, we gather here in Denver, Colorado Springs, Westminster and online, when you gather, you are declaring to every demonic influence and every person that sees that we're preferencing the Lord Jesus Christ that you can't see.

And he's that important to us that we'll give up other things to be here and honor him. And there's power in that, total power in that, and it's a different type of disciple. And once you honor the Lord, then we see number four. Powerful prayer occurs when we depend upon the Lord for our specific needs. When we depend upon the Lord for our specific needs, they've just got done saying they're going to cry out. You're going to hear and deliver us, just like in the Lord's prayer, "Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Let your kingdom come, let your will be done now on earth as it is in heaven. Now give us this day our daily bread." Lord, meet our specific needs. We

have needs. If you don't provide, we won't have our needs met. Now, for some of you, you're prideful enough to think that everything you have is your earning.

It's your job, it's your money, it's your hard work. Who gave you the ability to do all that? Who gave you your brain? Who gave you your body, who gave you your heartbeat? Who gave you the favor for the job that you have? Who gave you the intellect? I mean, it's all going to trace back to God eventually, and you're going to give him an account for how you honored him with it. Just saying, free of charge. All right, now look what they say in verse 10. Now behold, he's telling them what's happening with these three nations, the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir whom you did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, they turned aside from them and did not destroy them. See how they're rewarding us by coming to drive us out from your possession, which you have given us?

Here's what they're saying, "When we left Egypt, we went through all these nations. You wouldn't let us lay a finger on them, we didn't touch them, we didn't kill them, and now they're going to repay us by coming after us? Hey, this is your promised land, God, we're your promised people. You are the ones who put us here. You are the one who told us we could be here. Are you just going to let them come in and rout us? That doesn't seem right." So notice what he says next, as he continues to pray, he says, "Oh our God, will you not judge them?" Now notice what he says, "For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us, nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

You already praise. Lord, you got to do something. Here's why you got to act. We're powerless. There's nothing I can do here. When you're watching a loved one die, there's nothing you can do. When you're watching certain things happen in your life, there's nothing you can do. What is it that's going on? I can't do anything, Lord. If I could do something, I would change that. I can't change my child. I can't change their circumstance. I can't change my employer or my employee. I can't change. Lord, I'm powerless.

When you start saying to God you're powerless, that's when God begins to go to work because he holds all the power. But if you think you're powerful too and you'll team up with God, God's like, "Okay, go ahead, show me what you got, and then I'll come in when you're ready." No, God loves us declaring our dependence upon him. "I'm powerless, we don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you." I think that make an awesome T-shirt. We don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you. I mean, not a great prayer. We as parents don't know what to do, but her eyes are on you.

As a boss, I don't know what to do, but her eyes are on you. As a church, we don't know what to do, but her eyes are on you. As a nation, we don't know what to do, but eyes are on you. I mean, when you pray like that and you tell the Lord, we're powerless. "Oh, we don't know what to do, but you do. We're Going to listen for what you have to say." That's where you're going to see answer to positive, powerful prayers. But if you think you are powerful too, and if you think you have something to offer, you're like, "Well, I'm not that powerless and I can do some things too, and God, we can team up." You will never see answers to powerful prayer. Powerful prayer is

depending because you're powerless. Where it says in John's Gospel, "Apart from me, you can do nothing," nothing.

It's when you get dependent and desperate that God has a chance to do what he wants to do. So I love this, and notice verse 13, do not miss this. Maybe my favorite verse in the whole passage, "All Judah," how much of Judah?

Congregation:

All.

Pastor Jeff:

How much of Judah?

Congregation:

All.

Pastor Jeff:

Was there anybody not there? I mean, all Judah there was standing before the Lord. Well, did they have childcare? That's what I want to know, because my kid... All Judah was standing before the Lord with their infants, their wives and their children. How desperate are these people? We got to get into the house of God. We got to be in his presence and we're bringing everybody we want protected. And God, you've got to move. What would happen? Just what would happen, if all the people in our nation that are called by the name of the Lord would humble themselves and turn to the Lord and stop their wicked ways? What would God do? He would hear from heaven and

heal our land.

But for many of us like, "Yeah, I don't know. I don't have time for a prayer gathering. I don't have time to just pray. There's stuff to do." Not when you're desperate, there's not. Not when you're desperate. I look at our country, I look at our country, it's pretty desperate right now, and if you don't believe that, you're not watching very well, you're not seeing what's taking place. The only answer for what's going on in our nation is the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the only answer.

And the only hope we have as a nation, if those of us who are called by his name will gather in his church and tell him how desperate we are and we don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you. Because Lord, there's all these groups out there that are opposing you that are wicked, but yet at the same time you've called us to love them and share the gospel with them so they can get saved. And so, how's all that work and how do we hold true to who we are and show love to who they are? And how can you change their heart? Because if we could do it, we'd already do it, but we don't know how to do it. We're terrible at it. So Lord, we don't know what to do but our eyes are on you. So Lord, move through our church to save the loss, to turn the heart of this nation back to you. So the world would look on and say, "That nation can honestly say, in God we trust." It's Jesus, right?

And we depend upon the Lord for our specific needs. What are our specific needs? I mean, I don't know. I don't know 2024. God doesn't give me a glimpse of, "Here's all the things that are going to happen in 2020." I don't know, but I'm watching enough whether I'm watching the economy or I'm watching different nations rise up and

wars and rumors of wars, and all of the intrinsic internal battles where we can't even decide what gender we are or whether a baby has a right to life in the womb or any other thing that's already been decided in the Bible. We can't even figure that out. I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know the enemies that are going to come against us. I don't know who's going to try to shut down the church. I don't know. But what I do know is that my God is still God, and he's still true to his word, and if his church will continue to pray, God will do miraculous things that we've never ever seen done in any generation. That's what I believe.

So we pray and we seek him and everybody does it. We're all there. There's nothing more important we can do as a family. There's nothing more important I can do as a single. There's nothing more important I can do as a pastor than gather with all of God's people and seek his face and tell him, "We're powerless and we don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you about everything." Because we're so quick to give all our answers, and all we are is a bunch of talking heads that get nothing done. But if we would just humble ourselves a little bit and say, "I don't know, but I know God does and I want to listen for his answer." Then we can go to number five, "Powerful prayer occurs when we trust the Lord's answer and worship him." We trust the Lord's answer and we worship him.

I mean, if you're going to position yourself to hear the Lord, then when he does speak, you better believe what he has to say. Sometimes we don't even want to get to that place because we don't want the Lord to speak and show us, "Here's what I have to say." Other times we get all the way to this spot and we hear what the Lord says,

"Yeah, I didn't like that." I need to pray about that. Well, you've been praying about it. That's why the Lord's telling you. Notice what happens, verse 14, "Then in the midst of the assembly, the spirit of the Lord came upon Jehaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite of the sons of Asaph, and he said... Here's what he is going to say to the whole assembly, it's heard from God.

"Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehosaphat thus says to the Lord to you." Here's the word of the Lord. "Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but God's."

Congregation:

Woo.

Pastor Jeff:

Woo. Don't you love that? I mean, it reminds me of what Moses told his people, when God told them to keep moving and they're at the Red Sea and the Red Sea hasn't parted and the army of Egypt is coming up against them and Moses says to them, "The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent." I mean, there are times where God just fights the battle for us. You don't even have to participate, I got this. And we're like, "I love that. That was a good answer. I'm good on this." But notice what else he says, "Tomorrow, go down against them."

Wait, what? I thought we were going to win. Why do I need to show up? Why can't I just go see movies tomorrow? Why don't you go ahead, God, you got this. No, I want you to show up. You're going to go down to battle. You'll go down against them.

Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz and you'll find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. You need not fight in this battle, station yourselves. I mean, position yourselves. Stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf. "O Judah and Jerusalem, do not fear be dismayed tomorrow. Go out to face them for the Lord is with you." So trust him and go do what he tells you to do. Trust him and act. If you really believe him, go do it.

Now, is this a good war strategy? I mean, three armies coming against you, you're outmanned outnumbered, out weaponized. He's like, "Here's what I want you to do. Just show up. Go to the battle lines. It'll be good when you get there." That doesn't sound like a good strategy. And sometimes here's what we do. We hear what the Lord says, but it doesn't make sense to us, so we don't do it. If you wait until the Lord's word makes sense to you, there's many times you will miss the Lord. How does that make any sense? We want the Lord. Well, just show us they're going to fall over dead, then we'll go. Show me I'm still going to get married if I break up with this one, then I'll break up with them. Show me that this job's going to give me peace, then I'll take that job.

Show me if I go this way, then I'm going to have the income I need. Hey, show me. No, just go do it. Then you'll see it. Every good powerful thing the Lord's done in my life, it's always been by faith and I've never seen it and it's not made sense at the time. It's only been afterwards. I was telling the first service, I remember when God placed on my heart to go plant a church in Denver. Didn't make a whole lot of sense

because for the first time after doing our own ministry, we had enough resources and books were getting written, and we're on the radio and things are starting to happen. And that's where God prompts my heart. Move to Denver where you don't know anybody to start a church, because I know you haven't really liked church, and then go do it the way I'm going to show you.

And we went because I remember telling my wife as we were praying about it and going through it, I'm like, "I don't know where we're going to get money and I don't know where we're going to find people. And no, we don't have a building and no, we don't have a marketer and no, we don't have anything. And I don't know if even know if it's going to work, but I know the Lord's telling us to do this. And if we don't go, we're not being obedient. So let's go, and we'll just trust him to take care of the rest," and he's still doing it. Which is why I want to take bigger steps and more steps. Because the verse that you have hanging in your house, probably three, five and six, "Trusting the Lord with all your heart," and do not lean on your own understanding and all your ways acknowledge him and he'll make your past straight.

It's the word of the Lord, but here's how we read it. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean on your own understanding until it makes sense. In all your ways, follow him if it feels good, and then he's going to make it really, really comfortable for you to live your life. That's not what the verse says. I mean, don't you wish sometimes like, "Lord, we're already on the narrow road. Can't you just pave it," right? It doesn't have to make sense for it to be the Lord. Does it make sense for David to fight Goliath? Does it make sense for Elijah to call down fire? Does it make sense for Jesus to go to

the cross? None of those things make sense in the natural. They all make sense spiritually, because they were in tune to hear the Lord, so trust him. Some of us trust in chariot, some of us in horses, some of us in our family, some of us in politics, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God, Amen?

So trust the Lord's answer and then worship him. Notice what Jehoshaphat does, verse 18, Jehoshaphat bowed his head and his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. The Levites from the sons of the Kohathites and the sons of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a very loud voice. What's the king doing? He's getting him to worship God. God heard us. God answered us before we see the victory. Let's just worship him. Let's worship. Let's praise his name. Let's tell him how great he is. We haven't even seen the result yet, and we're worshiping. Don't forget that. You want to see God answer powerful prayer. Start worshiping before you see the answer to your prayer. Start thanking God before you see the answer to your prayer. Start telling him how great he is before you see the answer to your prayer.

Then you get to number six, which you started to talk about. Powerful prayer occurs when we obey God's directives and expect God's best. We obey his directives and expect his best. If you obey God, you're always going to get his best. Obedience always brings God's best. It may not be exactly what you want or how you want it, but if you obey God, you'll always have his best. Notice verse 20, they rose as Judah early in the morning and went to the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, here's his battle cry. It wasn't William Wallace. It wasn't

Mel Gibson playing William Wallace, it was King Jehoshaphat. And here's what he said, "Oh, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Put your trust in the Lord your God and you will be established. Put your trust in his prophets and succeed." He's like, "Put your trust in God and in his word, and we got this."

When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang. Who's he put out front? Who are his biggest soldiers? Singers, worshippers who sang to the Lord and those who praised him in holy attire, and they went out before the army. So the army's behind the worshipers. You would think in the natural, you put the army out first and then we'll come worship when we mopped up. No, you put the worship out front and you put the army behind because we need the spiritual battle one before the natural one takes place. So that's what happens. And then he gives thanks to the Lord for his loving kindness is everlasting. I used to pray that prayer, my Lutheran grade school growing up, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for his steadfast love, endures forever." Never understood what it meant at the time.

And notice what happens when they begin singing and praising, that's where all this stuff starts taking place. Don't miss this. When the worship starts, that's when God went to work. When they begin singing and praising the Lord said, ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir who had come against Judah. So they were routed. As soon as they begin to worship, all three of those nations coming against them are completely destroyed. Here's how it happened, watch, for the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely. So you can almost see these three armies. We don't know what

happened, but maybe these three armies are getting ready to take out Judah. And the two of them decided, we don't even like it. I mean, they started bantering back and forth. So these two armies killed the first one.

And then notice what happened next. Notice what happened next. And when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped destroy one another. So as they were battling, destroying the first nation, then they got into it with each other and started fighting each other. So by the time Israel gets there, or by the time Judah gets there rather, they're all dead and they haven't fired a shot or thrown a spear. When Judah came to the lookout of the wilderness, they look toward the multitude and behold, they were corpses lying on the ground and no one had escaped. Who can do that, but God. What would've happened if Judas said, "Well, that's good, but we're going to send our army out first. We're going to send our army." They would've got smoked. They would've got routed. What do they do? We're sending our worshipers out.

We're going to do exactly what God says. We're going to worship him. When God tells you what to do, just start worshiping him, and then go do it and see what God does. Now, notice this. I love this. When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, that's all the goods that they had. They found much among them, including goods, garments, and valuable things, which they took for themselves more than they could carry. There's so much good stuff, they couldn't even carry it all. And they were three days taking the spoil because there was so much. See, here's the

truth of the story. They were overwhelmed with fear because they thought God brought an enemy, when actually God was bringing all this blessing right to their doorstep so that they could have it if they just prayed, sought his face and worshiped him. It took them three days to gather all the blessing and cart it back.

I mean, they're exhausted now because God's what? He's too good. He's too lavish. He's too abundant. He's too awesome. That's our guy, right? And that's what they've experienced. They obey God at his word. So I love stories like Moses who said in Exodus 33, "Unless you go with us, we won't go. We need your presence." Or the Centurion in Matthew Chapter 8 where Jesus said, "I'll come heal your servant." And he said, "No, you don't need to come to my house. I'm in charge of a lot of people too. Just say my servant's healed, and I understand authority. He'll be healed." And Jesus said, "Wow, I've never seen faith like this anywhere."

James 4:17 says, "Anyone who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it, sins." When you hear the voice of the Lord and you procrastinate on it and you stop worshiping and you're not going and doing what he says, you're sinning and you're breaking fellowship with the Lord. I'm just encourage you, we hear the Lord and he's shown you what to do. And for some of you, it's been a minute, and for some of you it's been about five years or somebody that's been 15... Just go do it. Worship him and watch him show up. And then I love this. I love this. This is number seven.

Most of us, once we get a blessing, we're like, "Ah, yes, I've been waiting for my spouse forever. I can cool the prayer now. I can cool the worship. I've been waiting for this financial blessing. Thank you, God. Now, I don't have to pray for a while. God heal

me. I'm so thankful. But thank you, Lord, we're done on that one. Let's just keep living life now." That's not what happens here. If you want to experience powerful prayer, powerful prayer occurs when we continue to worship the Lord for his blessings, when it continues to be ongoing. Notice this on the fourth day, because for three days, they were just gathering the spoils of the war. On the fourth day, they assembled in the Valley of Berakhah. For there they blessed the Lord. Therefore, they have named that place the Valley of Berakhah until today. Berakhah means blessing.

The place where there was going to be a slaughter and murder is called the place of blessing because God blessed them there and gave them blessing there. So to this day, it was so-called the Valley of Blessing, Berakhah. Every man of Judah and Jerusalem returned with Jehoshaphat, the king at their head, returning to Jerusalem with what? With joy for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. They're still praising God. They're still rejoicing. The king is still rejoicing. They're still rejoicing for what? For the joy that the Lord had given them. And notice, verse 28, "They came to Jerusalem with harps, lyres, and trumpet," to where? The house of the Lord. Where do they go to celebrate? They don't go home like, "Oh, this has been a day. I'm tired. I want to go see my family. I just want to watch a good Netflix. I'm going to bed."

No, we're going to the house of the Lord. And how are we going to go? We're going to go with all our joy, all our fervor, all our instruments, and we're going to go worship him because our God needs to know that the worship of him is ongoing. And we don't worship him for what he gives us, we worship him for who he is, Amen? And that's why they continue to worship. It's interesting to me. I was alive during 9/11, as

you guys know, many of you were and some of you were not. But I remember during that time, 9/11 that week at church, it was three times the size in every church in America of what it was any other time, because everybody's fearful, and what's going on, and what's going to happen, and church is packed, and so many pastors dropped the ball. They're excited to see their attendance spike.

And it did for three weeks, boom. A month later, it was the same as it always was. Because you know why? Because everything was cool, we knew how to deal with it. See, it's the ongoing worship of God that he's looking for. It's a continual praise for his blessings. And when they did that, notice the result. Verse 29 says, "And the dread of God was on all the kingdoms of the land for they had heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. So the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for God gave him rest on all sides. If a nation wants to see peace with other nations and a nation wants to see fear from other nations, give yourself completely to the Lord and God will intervene, and do great things that otherwise could not be done. Think about the doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above the heavenly host. Praise him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, just praise him, worship him, seek him. I mean, you think about this and if we were the type of people, and I think many of us are who when we experience opposition that's overwhelming, we'll habitually respond with prayer and fasting, and will honor the Lord in his house and will depend upon the Lord for our specific need. And we'll trust in him and worship him, and we'll obey his

directives and say, "God, if you want us to do that, we're going that way and we're going to expect your best." And we continue to worship the Lord for his blessings. We will see powerful prayer answered, and not because we are powerful, but our God is powerful. And God just wants us to position ourselves before his power so that he can unleash it in and through us.

And oh, how I long to be a church, where the power of God is unleashed on a regular basis, and we're seeing first fruits of that. We are, and I want more and I want more and I want more. If you're here today and you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, that's the first place you can start. You want to experience personal power in your life. You need to have a relationship with the God of the universe. And it's not about getting religious or jumping through spiritual hoops or doing anything like that. It's about you recognizing you're a sinner and that you're dead in your sin before an almighty and perfect God.

And God's calling you to turn from your sin and repent. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for all your sins, that he rose from the dead and that he offers life to anyone who will say, "I want to be done with my sin and I want your life. I'm going to exchange all my sin to you for all your life and may come into my life, Lord Jesus." And some of you need to do that today.

And for those of you who have a relationship with Christ, let me just tell you this. He's given you the privilege of prayer through his son Jesus Christ. And you have access to all of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who has all power and all authority and rules all kingdoms, and nothing is impossible with our God.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

The biggest things that you would ask or the microcosm thing that you would ask. That's not even that big of a... God can handle it without even sweating. Posture yourself right before. And let's expect God to work through us in a powerful way. After I pray, I'm going to turn it over to the campuses.

We have some baptisms today. You're going to hear some testimony, and we're going to give God praise. Every single person that's coming up here has repented of their sin and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. Would you pray with me? "Father in heaven, we give you all the glory, honor and praise for who you are. And Lord, even as we see this video, remind us of how good you are and all that you're doing in our lives. Remind us of our own salvation story. And if we don't have one, let us invite you in our lives."

And if that's you, here's how you can pray. "Lord Jesus, I know I'm a sinner, no doubt about it, but I believe you came for my sin. I believe you died on the cross in my place, and were buried. I believe you rose from the grave and you're still alive. Lord, I want to turn from my sin and I want to trust you as my personal Lord and Savior right now. And Lord, for many of us listening, we've done that. We love you. Lord, thanks for reminding us of your word, the access we have in prayer to see you do supernatural, super abundant, awesome things in this generation. Lord, do it and

through us. Lord, help us be a church that seeks your face. Let this church be a house of powerful prayer. We give you all the glory and honor in Jesus name, Amen."