

The Power of Prayer unto Salvation

Introduction:

Before I begin I want to make clear that this is not a formula or in fact the only way to pray with regards to salvation. We can't put labels on things and say this is what and how you must pray. The minute we put God in a box you can be sure he'll jump right out. God doesn't always work the same way all of the time. What I'm saying is this is how God led me to pray using and standing on his word and the marvellous testimonies that have come about deserve to be told to give God glory and to encourage us. So in hearing this today I pray everyone will gain something out of this message that will encourage and bless you.

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John 3:16-17

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him

God's not willing that any man would perish and go to hell. The Bible says that hell was not prepared for mankind but for the devil and his angels.

Mat 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

(2 Peter 3:9) God desires that all men would come to repentance.

Jesus' mission was to bring salvation and hope to a lost world, he paid the penalty for our sin and there is nothing whatsoever we can do earn it, it's a sovereign gift of God.

My point is to establish that God desires everyone to be saved. I want to make this perfectly clear, that when we are praying for salvation for our loved ones or anyone for that matter we can have confidence that we are praying in the will of God.

Be encouraged this morning that no matter how hopeless a situation may be, no matter what a person may seem like on the outside, God alone knows their heart.

God can reach the worst sinner and even so called atheists have been known to call on God in desperate situations and get saved. Don't let an outside appearance put you off from praying for any lost soul.

(Mark 10:27) Remember this, that with God all things are possible.

(John 6:44) And no one comes to God unless God draws him.

Salvation is a sovereign work of God, and only God can convict a sinner and bring him to repentance. But we do have a part to play, through being a witness and praying.

Prayer can shift mountains; it brings God on to the scene where he finds a way to work in a persons life, he can cause the stony ground of a mans heart to become broken and soft.

With this in mind let's begin to pray for the lost, our loved ones, even if they do mock us, let's keep believing and trusting in the Lord not giving up.

This means we stand in prayer no matter how tense the battle might get, no matter how the relationship between you and who you are praying for may suffer, we stand praying and believing until God gives us an affirmation or a Rhema of their salvation, or saves them.

If we give in and stop praying and say to ourselves "well that didn't work" then we could delay and hinder a work of God.

Do you know the time when a person is most likely to give up; well it's usually just before the finish line especially when you can't see it.

I heard a story of a swimmer who swimming in strong currents, cold conditions and fog gave up their attempt to swim the English Channel just metres from the shore.

They gave up because they couldn't see. Had they known that the shore was only metres away they would have persevered and crossed the finish line.

Don't give in to what your senses tell you, or for the time it takes for someone to come to the Lord.

Gal 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

In our human weakness we can fail to realize the power that's within us when Christ comes into our lives, we fail to realize who we are in Christ; no longer are we sinners but children of the most high God.

We fail to realize that the greatest army in the world and all the weaponry they have there disposal does not come anywhere near the power or arsenal we have at our finger tips or I should say on our tongues.

We have a double edged sword in God's Word and if used correctly nothing can stand between us and victory.

If we fail to realize who we are in Christ the devil doesn't, he knows our potential and what we are capable of when Christ comes into our lives and will do anything to stop us from coming to that realization.

I don't care if you are the weakest of all Christians, God can work wonders through you if you only let him, and in fact God likes using them the most to display his glory.

The Bible tells us that we are kings and priests that we are clothed in robes of righteousness. We are Holy in God's sight. We are not just conquerors we are more than conquerors; we are over comers in Christ Jesus.

We are soldiers built for battle and we have authority to use the name that is above every other name, the name at which every knee will bow, the name that demons tremble at when they hear it, and that name is Jesus Christ the Lord.

When I got saved back in 1985 I had such a sensational transformation, truly I had a close encounter with the living God.

Christ had come and changed my life for good and I realized that my first wife (Sally) and I were in separate worlds, parted by a spiritual gulf like that mentioned in [Luke 16:26](#).

But I want to tell you this morning that while a person is still alive on this earth they can be rescued from that gulf and hell and it can be done through you and me through the power of prayer.

I found scriptures in the Bible relating to salvation. I got down before the Lord on my knees and I cried out to God. I stood on the Word of God and related these verses before the Lord.

The main scripture I used was Acts 16:31.

Acts 16:31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

We see this thread going back into the Old Testament.

In Joshua chapters 2 - 6 there is the story of a prostitute called Rahab, who hid two spies who came to spy out the Promised Land. Rahab knew of the power of God and knew that to live in Jericho meant death.

She made a plea with the spies so that she and her family could be saved. They told her to tie a scarlet cord in the window so they could escape and that Joshua and the Israelites would know that everyone in that house were to be spared.

When Joshua and the Israelites marched around Jericho, the walls came down and the Israelites killed everyone in the city except those in the house where the scarlet cord was tied.

This scarlet cord represents our only way of escape, which is the blood of Christ,

just like the blood of a lamb that was painted on the lintels of the Israelites homes in Egypt when the spirit of death past over them and the first born in Egypt died, whole families in the homes where the blood had been painted on the lintels were saved.

Who was saved when Noah went into the ark? Wasn't it Noah and his family? Here are lovely stories of salvation; of whole families being saved.

This theme is carried over to the New Testament in [Acts 16:31](#).

So I prayed, "Lord! your word says that when one is saved the household is saved, and you love Sally and are not willing that she perish, therefore I claim Sally for your Kingdom" and I thumped the couch with my fist, not in arrogance or disrespect toward God.

For me the act of claiming was like putting a seal on her salvation. It was not me demanding or telling God what he should do, it was as if I was putting a seal on God's promise. I was saying to God that I agreed with his word and I was taking hold of his promise.

I would then thank him for Sally's salvation and tell him what his word said in **Isa 55:11** that his word would go forth and accomplish that for which it was sent to do and that it would not return void.

I tell you when I prayed that way I suddenly felt like David must have done when confronting Goliath that no giant could stand against the word of the Lord.

If a small boy like David can stand against Goliath, what then can stand against us in Christ when we stand on God's Word?

First I was declaring God's word over Sally for Salvation and then declaring to God that I believed his word was so powerful when stood on in faith, that I believed his word would go forth and accomplish what it was sent to do, namely bring Sally to salvation, and then secondly thank him for her salvation. This I used to do on a daily basis.

You see you usually thank someone after you have received something, so by thanking God for her salvation beforehand I was acting in faith, acting as if she had already received her salvation.

I was acting in faith just like the centurion was when he came to Jesus, faith just like the Syro Phoenician woman who contended with Jesus for her daughter's deliverance.

Just as God says that he calls those things that are not as though they are, so was I.

Rom 4:17-25 (Msg) When everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he couldn't do, but on what God said he would do.

Abraham didn't focus on his own impotence and say, "It's hopeless. This hundred-year-old body could never father a child." Nor did he survey Sarah's decades of infertility and give up. He didn't tiptoe around God's promise asking cautiously sceptical questions. He plunged into the promise and came up strong, ready for God, sure that God would make good on what he had said. That's why it is said, "Abraham was declared fit before God by trusting God to set him right."

God changed Abram's name to Abraham which means father of many nations before the promise came to pass.

In other words if God said it was, then it was done. We can do the same we can call those things that are not as though they are if we know we are 100% in the will of God in what we are praying for or we have had a Rhema or affirmation.

I used to tell God in my prayer for Sally that I could see her and me standing in church together both raising our hands in worship. There came a day when that literally happened. Praise God!

Because God said that when one is saved the household is saved that was enough for me, Sally was saved end of story!

Can you begin to see now how powerful it is when you believe, declare and stand on the faithful word of God. Something stirs in your heart, faith begins to rise up.

Now before any of you get the wrong impression here I'm in no way advocating claiming in prayer in the sense of "name it and claim it".

To make a claim on anything whatsoever you need to be 100% sure that it belongs to you, true? So when God says – He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance, we can pray with confidence and authority and any sense of 'claim' is the act of total agreement with God and his word.

Twice I've prayed in this way for people and twice I've had confirmation that God has saved these people and in 2 weeks you will hear my testimonies.

So you can say that I was being very bold in praying to God in this manner and I want to back this up scripturally.

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We see a perfect example of boldness in the story of Esther. She was a Jew and one of God's chosen people, just like you and me. She was chosen for such a time as this, just as we are.

Mordecai had overheard a plan hatched by Haman to kill of the Jews and Esther went to the king to plead for the lives of her people.

But to go to before the king uninvited meant death and Esther at first shunned the idea. Mordecai persuaded her by saying "Yet who knows if you have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this".

Esther went boldly to the king with the attitude "If I perish I perish" making a decision that she was going to stand up for her people even if it meant her own death.

Now that is being bold, the King was pleased with her for being bold and she was rewarded with the lives of her people spared. Instead of Esther being put to death, the perpetrator Haman was hanged.

There are other instances in scripture where boldness is rewarded, Jacob, Rahab and David in the OT and the Centurion and Syro-

Phoenician woman in the NT, not to mention the exploits of Paul the apostle and many others.

I believe God is well pleased when we approach him in faith with boldness, diligence and perseverance.

Read about the unjust Judge in [Luke 18:1-8](#)

My experience in praying this way has been the joy of answered prayer, the deepening of my faith in God and a greater sense of understanding the ways in which God has worked in my life.

I believe that this experience can be shared by others who will boldly seek God for the salvation of their loved ones, who will trust that He desires that no-one should perish, who will seek him for his Rhema word and the seed of faith that will grow to move mountains.

Day after day I would come before God praying claiming, and thanking him for Sally's salvation.

To me claiming was a sense of coming into agreement with God's Word, it was like me putting a seal on His Word because he desired all to come to salvation.

In those days I was so overboard in my faith, everything was black and white, you see I had had this incredible transformation and encounter with God and couldn't understand why Sally couldn't grasp it.

I was young in the Lord and I didn't realise that Sally needed a revelation of Jesus just like the disciples when they met Jesus on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection and they didn't recognise him until he had opened their eyes.

I couldn't understand that she was like doubting Thomas and couldn't believe until she had seen the scars on his hands and placed her fingers in his side so to speak, that she needed to her to have her own experience in coming to God.

I used to tell her all that God had done and that she needed Jesus too. This put quite a strain on our relationship, I continued to pray for her and instead of things improving they got worse. One day she got angry and shouted at me, "You go your way and I'll go mine".

I could have given up then but I persevered and continued to believe and pray to God in the same way daily. I had to come to a place where I let go of doing things my way and begin to let God do it his way.

How could I expect God do his work when I was in his way? So I learned to let go and stop telling her what she must do, all God required of me was to be a witness in the way I lived and to love her.

One day she decided she would like to come to church and so she came and heard the word preached. When our Pastor invited people forward for salvation I would give her a friendly little kick which was my way of saying, “Get up there woman you need Jesus”. With that I would get a sharp reply back, “Stop kicking me”!

Again I had to take my hands off the situation and wait for God’s timing. At that time our son was about 3 years old and Sally used to take him out to the crèche during the sermon. Little did I know how God was working there behind the scenes, we don’t have to hear a sermon for God to get our attention and draw us to himself.

Then one morning Sally had again taken our son out to the crèche and during the worship I heard the loud audible voice of God speak to me, “The angels are rejoicing around the throne”. God was telling me before the event that Sally was going to be saved.

I knew that what he had just told me related to a sinner repenting (Luke 15:10) but I didn’t even think he was referring to Sally at the time after all she wasn’t in the auditorium but out in the crèche. The crèche was too

far away for her to hear and there were no speakers relaying the sermon out there.

At the end of his sermon our Pastor gave the invitation for those who wanted to ask Jesus into their lives to come forward, and the door to the auditorium opened and in walked Sally, Daniel in her arms walking towards the alter.

I could see by the look on her face that there was a battle going on, God drawing and the enemy pulling back. I walked over to her to take our son from her when she turned and said, "You say anything and I won't go up there." But she did and asked Jesus to come into her life.

Then our Pastor then asked a young woman from the congregation called Rachel to counsel her on the decision she had just made.

As we drove down the drive of our church to go home suddenly it hit me like a thunderbolt of what the Lord had spoken to me earlier on. I said, "Sally, the Lord told me you were being saved today he told me during the worship that the "Angels were rejoicing around the throne." Sally jerked her head around and stared at me, "That's what Rachel said to me too."

Later that evening when I was talking to Rachel she told me that she had never counselled anyone on the decision they had made to come

into relationship with the Lord that she had asked God to tell her what to say to Sally. She said that the Lord told her to tell Sally that the angels were rejoicing around the throne.

I was praying 3½ years for her to come to God, and it was a battle but in the end it was well worth it. The first year or so was a good for us as we both grew in the things of God, but it wasn't to last. About a year or so later Sally got cancer and in Sept 1994 she went home to be with the Lord.

If you think that was an amazing testimony of God's saving power then this one is even more amazing. I prayed the same way for my parents as well, not as regular as I did for Sally but still standing on God's word and claiming them for his Kingdom.

I lived in Auckland and Mum and Dad lived in Putaruru, a small town 60 km south of Hamilton. Just like with Sally I would always have a story to tell them about God and what God had done for me. I used to notice my dad would often have a smirk on his face one of disbelief.

One day my mum, like Sally shouted back to me, "You always talk about religion when you come here."

Again I had to lay off and allow God to do his work. I didn't give up I continued to pray, stand on God's word believe and trust God.

One day a lady in our Church was testifying how her father had come to know the Lord, and suddenly I had an affirmation, an assurance from God that my parents were going to be saved. It was such a strong assurance it was like they were saved already, again I knew in my heart that prayer had accomplished its task and their salvation.

Oh this God he's so amazing he works in ways we don't understand, he works in ways that are far above what ever we can imagine.

The year was 1996 about 18 months since Sally had died. My nephew had rung about 4pm Saturday 27th January; I remember it had been a lovely hot sunny summer's day. "Your dad has had a heart attack and has been rushed to Waikato Hospital by helicopter".

I had a shower and was getting ready to go to the hospital when I heard the Lord speak saying "Hurry". I arrived at the hospital to find my dad in a coma and very near death. The doctor asked if I wanted a priest, I replied no and said I would like to pray for him.

I got down beside the bed and held his hand and told him it was still not too late that he could still get his life right with God. I knew that people in a coma can still hear. I didn't pray the sinners pray but just prayed sometimes in tongues and that God would have mercy on him and save him.

When I finished praying and opened my eyes I noticed that he had died, and asked the doctor who was standing next to the bed, “When did he die?” he said “The moment you finished praying for him.”

On the way back to Auckland that night I put on radio Rhema and the song they were playing was the first confirmation that my Dad had been saved on his death bed in a coma. The very first words I heard first in the song were, Death where is your sting, death where is your victory. (1 Cor 25:15).

Wow, our God is a great God. Still there is more, the 2nd confirmation came in my daily reading for the following day:-

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From:- Streams In The Desert. Vol 2

Mrs Charles Cowman.

We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said I will give you.

(Num 10:29)

I saw a way-worn trav'ler

In tatter'd garments clad,

And struggling up the mountain

It seemed that he was sad;

His back was laden heavy,

His strength was almost gone,

Yet he shouted as he journeyed,

Deliverance will come.

*The summer sun was shining,
The sweat was on his brow,
His garments worn and dusty,
His steps seem'd very slow,
But he kept pressing onward,
For he was wending home,
Still shouting as he journeyed,
Deliverance will come.*

*The songsters in the arbor
That stood beside the way
Attracted his attention,
Inviting his delay:
His watchword being 'Onward'
He stopped his ears and ran,
Still shouting as he journeyed
Deliverance will come.*

*I saw him in the evening ,
The sun was bending low,
He'd overtopped the mountain,
And reached the vale below,
He saw the Golden City-*

*His everlasting home.
And shouted loud, Hosanna,
Deliverance will come!*

*While gazing on that city,
Just o'er the narrow flood,
A band of Holy angels
Come from the throne of God:
They bore him on their pinions
Safe o'er the dashing foam;
And joined him in their triumph-
Deliverance has come!*

*I heard the song of triumph
They sang upon that shore,
Saying, Jesus has redeemed us
To suffer nevermore:
Then casting his eyes backward
On the race which he had run,
He shouted loud. Hosanna,
Deliverance has come!*

-Rev. John B Matthais, 1836

The Miracle.

My dad was 79 when he died his time was up. On that day he had an angina attack at home and my mum called the ambulance. They decided to hospitalize him, they put him on a stretcher and as they were carrying him down the steps he had a major heart attack and died.

The medics did all they could to revive him but to no avail. They told mum they had lost him and covered him and placed him in the ambulance. Then they called back to mum that a flicker of life had returned.

They then called for a helicopter from Hamilton to Putaruru to take him to Waikato hospital. To me this is a miracle of God. Here is an old man his life almost gone just holding on by a thread yet they get a helicopter to take him to hospital so as to shorten my journey to pray for him, not that the medics were thinking of that. Surely if he was going regain consciousness he would have done so while the medics were working on him not after they had given up and placed him in the ambulance.

He was able to hang on until I had prayed for him, then he was quickly gone, home to the Lord.

The 3rd Confirmation.

A short time after that Daniel my son who was then 10 years old had been to a Bible camp at Raglan for the weekend and that night in bed I

heard him crying and going in to him thinking he was missing his mum he told me that at camp the leaders had got the boys to sit down to pray when he had a vision.

He said, "I saw Jesus come and pick me up in his arms and he took me up into heaven. I saw mum, she came over picked me up and hugged me and I saw Grand dad and Timmy and Smokey." Timmy was our pet cat that got ran over a few months before Sally died and Smokey another cat that also got ran over after Sally had died. (My dad was completely bald just a ring of hair around the sides and back of his head.) I asked Daniel, "What did Granddad look like?"

He thought for a moment and said, "He had all his hair back but was still grey." I then asked him, "How old did Grand dad look?" "He said, as though he was only 30 years old." I asked him, "What Heaven was like?" He said, "I couldn't tell it was all white". Then Jesus came back to him and said it's time to go back.

When I started I said that this is not a formula, that we can't say that this is only way to pray as God often uses different ways to bring people to him, But God does respond to faith, he does respond to persistent prayer especially when its based on his word and promises, he loves us to wrestle with him in prayer not giving up, breaking through the barriers

in victory just like Joseph and Abraham, the centurion and the Syro Phoenician woman to name just a few.

In closing I want to encourage you, what a gracious loving God we have, that in the midst of adversity God is watching over us and for those who don't understand the perplexity of life and death and for those who find things sometimes too overwhelming, God comes with his love and shows us that everything is alright and that he has all things in his control, that he holds us in the palm of his righteous right hand and will never leave us or forsake us.

If you put your trust in him and are prepared to go the distance whatever that distance might be, I assure you God will not disappoint you, that you will become a much stronger believer and your faith while tested will grow. And in your relationship with God you will grow closer to him and you will become all the richer through the experience. Know this, God will not test you beyond what you're able to handle.

Just imagine when you get to Heaven when someone comes up to you and says, thank you so much for praying for me and trusting God not giving up. To hear God say to you on the last day, well done good and faithful servant come and enter the joy of the Lord.