

# A Place for His Name // 1 Kings 8 // *The Whole Story* #19

## Intro:

After a national championship in just about every sport, you'll see the winning team put on **t-shirts and hats** with their team's name and "national champs" and *whatever year* on them.

- Literally, the **moment the final buzzer** goes off, they are wearing them.
- And when I saw that as a kid, I always thought, "How do they make those things that quickly?" (And then, of course, I had the genius realization that they had to have a stash of shirts on hand for either team ready to go for whoever won.)

**"Ah, but what happens to the losing team's shirts," I asked?** Nobody wants to wear that... Well, for a long time, the **NFL and the NBA** & the others sent them straight to the incinerator. **But about 15 years ago**, humanitarian aid groups lobbied to have them sent to kids in poorer countries who wouldn't know they were inaccurate, or care.

- I think at one point when I lived in **SE Asia**, I remember seeing a **1998 Utah Jazz championship hat**—back when Michael Jordan was dominating everything with the Bulls. And I saw it and thought, "Was there ever even a chance that the Jazz...?"

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron 2:17-18. That's a labor cost, in today's terms of, 36 trillion dollars.

## Works Consulted:

Louie Giglio, "Indescribable"

Joby Martin, "Dwelling"

Charles Spurgeon, "One Greater Than the Temple"

Chris Gaynor, "Humble Yourself"

- So for all of the **Carolina fans** out there, there's hope. If you travel enough places in the world, you might be able to find that **coveted 2016 UNC national championship hat** in Haiti, or the 2016 Carolina Panthers Super Bowl t-shirt in Tajikistan. That's **why we do mission trips**, ladies and gentleman.

**These items were created to remember a great victory with joy.** But now the sight of them only reminds the losers of their shame.

In many ways, that's **what the Temple became** for Israel. It was **supposed to be the greatest expression** of their victory—their glory. **Instead it became** instead the great symbol of their failure.

(1 Kings 8:1–62)

**As we journey on through *The Whole Story*, we come now to the story of King Solomon, David's son, dedicating the Temple he has just built for God. *1 Kings 8, if you have your Bible.***

- It's **hard for us to appreciate** what a magnificent structure it was.
- God had made Solomon **really, really wealthy**, and the Temple he built reflected that.
- It was **huge**. It took more than **150,000 laborers** more than 8 years to construct it.<sup>1</sup>
- Everything was **layered in gold**: According to 1 Chronicles, Solomon used more than **4000 tons** of gold and **40,000 tons** of silver.<sup>2</sup> The price of what he used, in today's value, would be more than **160 trillion dollars**. That is trillion, as in "T."

<sup>2</sup> 100,000 talents of gold

- One scholar said the amount of gold Solomon used in the temple was **about 4–5% of all the gold ever mined on earth**. As in, of all of the gold we've ever mined on earth, 1/20 of it was in *one* building.<sup>3</sup>
- And **then there were the precious stones**—marble and onyx and rubies and emeralds—that were all over the walls and the pillars. This thing had serious bling power.

But the **most awesome thing about this Temple** was when the glory of God—in a thick, luminescent cloud—descended upon it. **1 Kings 8** tells us that the **cloud was so thick**, and the glory so bright, that the priests had to leave the temple.

10 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. 11 And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple.

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven<sup>23</sup> and prayed: *(BTW, a lot of great things in this prayer, but I'm going to focus on only a few of them)*

29 ...May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place.

33 "When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and give praise to your name, making requests to you in this temple, 34 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people..."

35 "When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain... 37 "When famine or plague comes to the land... or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, 38 and when a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel—being aware of the afflictions of their own hearts ("afflictions" here means "sinful tendencies." Being aware in Hebrew is *yada*, which means a very intimate knowledge—the same word they used for a man to "know" his wife. So he's saying, if you really grasp your sinfulness and confess it...), and spreading out their hands toward this temple— 39 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act..."

41 "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land *because of your name*— 42 for *they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray* toward this temple, 43 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. *Do whatever the foreigner asks of you*, so that all the peoples of the earth may *know your name and fear you*, as do your own people Israel, and *may know that this house I have built bears your Name*.

54 When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven.

55 He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying: 56 "Praise be to the LORD... Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses. 58 May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors."

62 Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD.<sup>63</sup> Solomon offered... twenty-two thousand cattle and a

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.creationconcepts.org/resources/SOLOMON.pdf>

**hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats.** (that's 142,000 animals total)

That prayer expresses **what the Temple was supposed to be:** a place of refuge for Israel, and a place where the foreigner could come and find salvation. This was the height of Israel's glory.

But sadly, **Israel did not heed what Solomon's final admonition** here... In fact, **Solomon himself** did not even stay faithful to the commands, decrees and laws of God.

**Solomon had a weakness: women.** 700 wives; 300 concubines. He was the wisest man ever to live; **that is insane.** And he liked exotic women, so he married all these princesses from around the world, and they **brought their foreign gods** into his house with them. And he built little temples and shrines to their gods and even began to worship them himself.

This was a **harbinger of the entire future of Israel.** Israel is going to have a **succession of kings** that, on the whole, **not only tolerated** the worship of other gods, but gave themselves entirely to them.

Now, it's **easy to remove ourselves from this and think**, "Well, we don't do that anymore. I don't have any shrines to false gods set up in my house; I didn't bring a false god here to church in my pocket that I sneak a prayer to during worship (I love you, Lord... *and you, too*)

But realize that **the worship of other gods** in those days was about more than just religion. **For them, these gods promised survival.**

False gods in the ancient world were **called "ba'als,"** and each one was tied to a specific thing that people wanted.

- There was the "ba'al" of **fertility**, for example, or the ba'al of **good health**;

- **Each career field** had its own ba'al: there was the ba'al of **rain**; the ba'al of the **harvest** (he was called the ba'al of hay);
- The **nearby Greeks** had gods and goddesses for every sphere of life:
  - They had **Artemis/Diana**: goddess of prosperity, money
  - **Athena**: the goddess of intelligence and political prowess. In her temple they had this picture of Zeus' head being split open and her being taken out... So if you wanted to get straight A's you worshipped her.
  - **Nike**: the goddess of victory, worshipped by athletes and warriors and Michael Jordan, who made you run faster, jump higher, and soar above the competition.
  - **Aphrodite**: she was the goddess of sexuality, beauty. You worshipped her by having sex with prostitutes in the temples. That's one way to get men back in church, I guess.
  - **They even had Cloacina**, the goddess of the sewer system. I'm **not sure exactly how you made an offering** to her... don't want to know... sometimes we light a candle in our bathrooms, not sure if that was considered an act of worship or not.

**So here was the deal.** When you needed something, you could ask God like Solomon tells them to do, and wait on him, or you could turn to one of these false gods. And **a lot of times people got impatient with God** and **lost confidence that he'd really provide**, so they turned to idols.

**Sadly, that is the course Israel chose**, and because of that, God eventually **sent them into exile**, out of the Promised Land, just like he promised he would.

- The **Assyrians invaded the Northern 10 tribes of Israel in 722 B.C.** and carried them off to captivity, and then the **Babylonians came in 586 B.C.** and took captive the final two, Southern tribes...

Now, I want to leave 1 Kings 8 and go to Ezekiel, because right before the Southern two tribes—where the Temple was—was carried off into captivity, the prophet Ezekiel has this vision about the Temple:

**10:4** The glory of the LORD rose from above the cherubim and moved to the threshold of the temple. The cloud filled the temple, and the court was full of the radiance of the glory of the LORD...

**18** Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim. **19** While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground... They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

**11:23** Then the glory of the LORD went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it. **Ezekiel 10:4–11:23** And then it departed from earth.

**And you read that, and you think,**

- *Is that it? Is that the last chapter?*
- *Has the glory and presence of God departed forever?*
- *You may remember when we went through Noah, we saw that God came close to destroying everything in the flood, but he stopped short and restored everything through one family. But is he done now—just too fed up this time? Is this finally the end?*

**No.** Your Bible doesn't end in Ezekiel. God had **determined to bring salvation** to the human race. He had made **unconditional promises** to Abraham and David, and even **Israel's failures** would not stop him from keeping that promise.

Interestingly, **the Gospel of Luke**<sup>4</sup> tells us that on Jesus' final ride into Jerusalem, he and his disciples went up this **same mountain** that Ezekiel saw the glory of God depart from. There he **got on a donkey** and rode back down it into Jerusalem. (It really didn't make a lot of sense for him to do this, because he was just going up the mountain to come back right back down.)

Then Jesus entered Jerusalem itself **through the East Gate** (which is where Ezekiel saw the glory of God depart from), and then **rode straight into the temple**, where he took out a whip and cleansed it, driving out the moneychangers who were buying and selling in the temple.

Interestingly, the **place that Jesus drove them out** from was the **"Court of the Gentiles,"** and Jesus said,

**"Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a 'house of prayer for all the nations?' But you have turned it into a den of thieves."** (Luke 19:46; Mark 11:17)

**This was supposed to be a place where foreigners** from other nations found hope in me; instead, you have turned it into a place to make money for yourselves.

**So Jesus took out a whip and cleansed it, restoring it to its original purpose...** and then he **offered himself** as a sacrifice. Not 142,000 animals, like Solomon did, but himself. Because **animal blood could never take away** sin and cleanse the heart. Only his blood could.

- **His blood would do what no Temple**, no matter how beautiful, could ever do. It would **not only cleanse our sins but take it away, and change our hearts** so that we would love and seek God and not give ourselves to idols!

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 19:28–48

- **And then he said whosoever will**—foreigners from any nation on earth—can come to me and pray, and **find forgiveness and healing** in my name.

The **glory of God, Ezekiel predicted**, would no longer be found in a beautiful place, the Temple; but in a beautiful person, Jesus.

- **And anyone who comes to him, from any nation**, by faith, for forgiveness and healing for their sin, will receive it.
- **AND those who come to God through his name**, in prayer, God will hear.

So we are **supposed to take all the promises Solomon gave to them about the Temple** and apply them to ourselves, when we pray in Jesus' name, because *all the promises of God are **yes in Christ Jesus*** (2 Cor 1:20).

So here we go (here's **what that look like**):

### 1. God answers prayer

- I know that seems obvious, like a **Sunday School answer** (you know, a Sunday school answer, where the answer is always **God, Jesus or prayer**... GRAY squirrel)
- But, do you really believe that? Just listen to these promises again...
  - *Vs. 29, my eyes and ears will be open to this temple both day and night...*
  - *I will hear whatever my servants pray...*
  - *When you have been defeated by an enemy because you sinned against me (vs. 33)*
  - *When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain... (vs. 35)*
  - *When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges you in any of your cities,*
  - *whatever disaster or disease may come, (vs. 36)*

- *When a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel (vs. 37)*
- *“When you spread out your hands toward this temple and pray, I will forgive and act.”*

- **Isn't it clear from these promises** that he actually *answers* prayer, and that our prayer *changes* things?
- **Isn't it clear from how Jesus repeated** these same promises?
  - **Matthew 7:11**, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”
  - **Matthew 21:22**, “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”
  - **John 14:13**, “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”
  - **Paul Miller says: “All of Jesus' teaching on prayer in the Gospels can be summarized in one word: ASK!”**
  - **1 John 5:14**, “This is the confidence which we have before him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”

**And don't we see God's willingness to answer prayer demonstrated from the life of Jesus himself?**

**On Monday night I told this story:** The Gospel of Matthew records the story of a woman coming up behind Jesus to touch the hem of his garment because she needed him to heal her. Jesus turns around and says, “Who touched me?” He genuinely doesn't seem to know.

His disciples are like, “What do you mean, someone touched you? Dozens of people are pressing in on you from every side.” He says, “No, someone *touched me*, touched me. I know because I *felt the power go out from me*.” (Matthew 9:18–26).

This passage amazes me, because Jesus talks about his healing power as if it were a reflex that he can't control; an involuntary, passive response generated by the woman's faith.

And here's **what bothers me as a theologian**: Aren't we talking here about God, who knows the end from the beginning? Does he really mean to imply that she surprised him, or that he's not in control of his healing power?

No, **of course he's not trying to say he doesn't really know** what is going to happen. The only reason I can come up with that the story is told this way is to show us that **Jesus' response to faith is so reliable** that it might as well be an involuntary reflex.

- Again, this is **first and foremost about salvation**. (*God forgives and heals, immediately, when we lay hold of him as our Savior in faith.*)
- But it's **also about how God continues to work** in our lives.

**Here's something we say on staff**: "Where trust exists, God moves." Faith enacts a power from God that is not available until you believe. When you believe, God begins to work. If you don't, the power is not there.

- **Peter walked on the water because he believed**, and when he didn't, he sank.

I understand that the Bible teaches that **God is not a genie in a bottle**. But it also shows, in no uncertain terms, that Peter's faith *activated* Jesus' power to hold him above the waves. And **when he stopped believing**, the power disappeared. Does that mean it was God's sovereign will for Peter to sink? I don't know. Maybe. But I also know that had Peter continued to believe, he would have stayed on top of the wave.

Let me say this in a **deliberately provocative** way: In the Gospels, Jesus doesn't respond to "prayer." In fact, he criticizes people for

thinking that God will hear them for their "much speaking" (Matthew 6:7). He responds to faith. When someone believes, he acts.

**So I have begun the practice of saying to God after I pray**, "God, I trust you with this." That's because I often tell God about my problems without the faith he is going to move. But I know that when I place my trust in him, he has to move. He won't ever abandon those who lean on him in faith. That, of course, doesn't mean that he's doing things exactly like I think they should be done, just that I know he is moving with goodness and grace as I continue to believe. He promises to be. Where trust exists, he moves.

**Recently our staff took a short, spiritual retreat**, and one of the exercises we did was to re-write Psalm 136 in our own words. In **Psalm 136** the psalmist recounts all the ways God has worked in Israel. In between each great act, he writes, "for his steadfast love endures forever." I wrote out all the ways I've seen God work in my life—directing me, awakening me, providing for me. After each phrase, I wrote, "for his steadfast love endures forever." When I looked back over what I had written, I had this sudden sense of how faithfully *God*, through steadfast love, had worked in my life. My parents, godly as they were, didn't engineer most of the most strategic moments in my life. God did. And then I thought about my own kids. You see, I worry a lot about being the right kind of parent to my kids. What if I do something wrong? What if I fail to do something I am supposed to do? What if I fail to engineer some strategic moment in their lives? But as I read Psalm 136 aloud, I realized that if God had been so faithful to me, couldn't I trust he would be faithful to them, too? Had his steadfast love ceased to "endure forever"? So I said, "God, I trust you to work in their lives." And I know that he is. And as a parent, suddenly I am walking on water.

God says when we trust in *him* with all our heart, and lean not on our own understanding or abilities, and acknowledge him in all our ways, he *promises* to direct our paths and sustains our steps.

**Are you trusting God with things in your life?** When you lean on him, he moves.

## 2. When faced with critical need, our choice is trusting prayer or turning to idols

- **You are going to face needs** in your life, are you going to trust him or turn to a substitute provider?
- **Here's what that looks like:**
  - *"I'm not sure that God can make me happy in romance or in my sexuality, so in this area, I'll take matters into my own hands."*
  - *"I'm not sure that God will supply my needs, so I'll hoard my money; refuse to be generous and tithe; overwork, and worry all the time."*
  - *"I'm not sure God's plan is best for me, so I won't lay down my life or my career before him as a blank check."*
  - *"I don't think God will really take care of me... won't go on mission trip." Or my kids.*
- **When you have a need, you'll do one of two things:** trust God, or turn to an idol. Turning to an idol will drive out the glory of God from your life and send you into the wilderness.

What are you going to do when he doesn't answer in exactly the way you think he should?

- **Can you trust that he is moving**, even when you can't see it, *because he promised that he would?*
- **One of my favorite promises of prayer:** **Luke 11:11** What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; **12** or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?
  - **Parents, ever do that**—kid asks you for a chicken nugget and you're like, "No, but here's a cobra..."?)

- **But let's reverse that:** If your child asks you for a scorpion, will you give them a scorpion? No.
- **As a parent, sometimes you tell your kids no** not *in spite* of the fact that you love them, but *because* you love them.
- God is no different. **One of the great ironies...** sometimes what looks to us like bread is a scorpion; and what looks like a scorpion is bread.

- **Write this down:** Sometimes God answers our prayers by giving us what we would have asked for if we knew what he knew.
- *No good thing does he withhold*, Psalm 84 says, from those who walk uprightly.
- **So when he says no**, as sometime he does, you have to trust him!

### John and Betty Stam

John and Betty Stam had given their lives to bring the gospel to the emerging nation of China. John was a talented doctor, and he and Betty could have chosen a very comfortable life in the United States. But they felt like God wanted them to live East Asia during a time when that the nation was being turned upside down through the bloody and brutal Communist revolution.

On the afternoon of December 8, 1934, word came to Betty Stam, while she was in her home with her newborn baby girl, that the Communists were at the door of their village of Miaoshou (Mee-ow-show). Whenever Mao Tse Tung and his Red Army conquered a new village, they executed the influential people and the foreigners, as well as any they thought might oppose the revolution.

Betty knew there was no chance she and John could escape. She knew that the Communists would either kill her baby outright, or leave it to die. So in the 4-5 minutes she had before the Communist soldiers stormed her home, she wrapped the baby up tightly, put a bottle in the blanket, and even pinned some money

on the inside of the blanket so that whoever found her would have the means to take care of her. Then she hid her in a closet, just seconds before the Communists stormed in.

The Communists marched Betty and John up a hill outside of Miaoshou and shot them. The little infant girl lay in the closet for 2 days. Because the village had been completely evacuated, no one was left to hear the baby's cries.

On the evening Dec 9, 1934, one of the Stams' friends came to the village, looking for the bodies of the slain family so that he could bury them. As he was passing through the village, remarkably, he heard the baby's cries from the closet. He took newborn Helen Priscilla Stam to the homes of Chinese believers, who raised her until she was five, at which point they evacuated her back to the United States to be raised by relatives.

One of the Stams' friends later remarked that if God had so remarkably and providentially cared for baby Helen as she lay abandoned in that closet, was there any doubt he could not also have saved the lives of John and Betty, too, had he wanted?<sup>5</sup> If so, why didn't he?

I know it would make a beautiful story if I could answer that question. As in, **the guard who shot them saw their love** and courage in their dying moments, realized the futility of Communism, and went on to become China's greatest evangelist! And maybe that happened. But we just don't know. And that's the thing—we often don't know why God does or does not do certain things.

For a lot of things, we may never know exactly what God did or why he did it this side of eternity.

● It's like John Piper says, at any moment God is doing around 10,000 things in your life, and you are aware of only about 3 of them.

But here's what we can be sure of: When he doesn't do something the way we think he should, it has nothing to do with him ceasing to love us or losing control of circumstances.

*Because you see, we have more than "small providences" to assure us of God's love and control. We have Jesus' death and resurrection. So we know that when we trust him, he is always moving, always working.*

**What are you going to do when you have a need?** Continue to trust the God who gave himself for you at the cross, or turn for refuge to substitute providers, obedience to idols?

### 3. Testifying to a prayer-answering God is a crucial part of our witness

- The foreigner was supposed to hear about this prayer answering God and come to the Temple and experience a prayer-answering God.<sup>6</sup>
- That's the reputation we are supposed to have in the community, in Jesus' name.
- Throughout the Bible, God presents answered prayer as a critical part of our witness.
- When Moses described to Israel what would distinguish them from every other nation on earth, he said that answered prayer would be the distinguishing mark: *"For what great nation is there*

<sup>5</sup> 'Everything about her deliverance [they wrote] tells of God's love and power. And we know that if He could bring a tiny helpless infant, not three months old, through such dangers in

perfect safety, He could no less surely have saved the lives of her precious parents, had that been in His divine plan for them.'" *The Triumph of John and Betty Stam*, p. 116

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings 8:42-43

*that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon him?" (Deuteronomy 4:7)*

- **Answered prayer:** not great music or great preaching or even great giving, but answered prayer.<sup>7</sup>
- When **Elijah** wanted to demonstrate to Israel which God was the true God, what was the test? The God who answered prayer.
- **There's a story from the early church, in Acts 6...** The apostles were consumed with taking care of the needs of widows, and it was taking up all their day. They asked for volunteers from the church to help them, who became deacons, so that they could devote themselves to "prayer and the ministry of the word." We focus on "the ministry of the word." But what prayer? We think of that as usually the prayer we put in to prepare for the ministry of the word. But that's not the way it is written. Prayer doesn't just empower the ministry; *prayer is the ministry*.
  - **What if we saw the prayer times at the end of our services** not just as a "if you have been really moved by the word, here's a relief valve," but as one of our primary ministries and most important parts of our experience?
- Jesus said: "*My house shall be called a 'house of prayer' for all nations,*" not a house of preaching.
  - **Is that how someone would describe our church?** Is prayer one of the **top 3 words** people would use to characterize what happens here?
  - **We put a ton of energy into the word** (sermons, small groups). Do we put that **same energy** into prayer?
- **Are we known as a praying people?** Do people hear about our answers to prayer?
  - **Illus. Me in Indo...** when I didn't know what to do.
- **Are we out praying for people?**
  - E.g. What you can do with a neighbors?

- Me with waitress... **One of our CP's asked that and she said, "A new job."** He was like, "I hope he won't answer that prayer before you bring me my food."
- As I pointed out, **Jesus got the angriest** when Israel obscured this dimension of the ministry to foreigners.
  - **Have we obscured that here?**

#### 4. Sin drives out the presence of God

- **All through this prayer**, Solomon makes God's activity in your life conditional on "when you repent." When you get really familiar with your sin...
- David says in **Psalm 66:18**, "If I regard sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." If I regard...!
- Paul tells us in Ephesians that we can "**grieve**" the **Holy Spirit of God**" through **how we treat each other**—holding grudges, slandering, gossiping, failing to forgive; or through **cutting corners**, telling lies, or immoral compromises.
- **A few weeks ago we took a look at a man named Achan** we looked at several weeks ago harbored unconfessed sin in his tent, and that made the power of God leave Israel and Israel lost a key battle and many people died because of it.
- **Unconfessed, regarded, harbored, sin extinguishes the power and presence** of God like water does a flame.
- **You say you want God's help—**
  - **Is there unconfessed sin** in your life?
    - *He will forgive you, whatever it is, but you have to confess it, humbly, and turn from it!*
  - **Are there areas of your life not under his control?**
    - *He wants to help you, but you have to surrender to him and give him control first.*

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<sup>7</sup> Genesis 4:25, when the godly line of SEth separated from the ungodly descendants of Cain, the phrase used to describe the godly were "those who called upon the name of the Lord." Not "Christians," or "Jews" or "people who tithe" but "people who call on the name of the

Lord." They told others, "There is a God you can call upon!" And the others said, "Well, we've heard that there is a Creator." They said, "He's more than Creator; he's a Father who hears and answers our prayers."

- **LISTEN: He can forgive whatever you bring to him...** but you have to bring it to him.
  - **Sin is not more powerful than God's presence.**
  - Yes, sin can drive out God's presence, but God's presence can also drive out sin.
    - **When you confess your sin**, whatever it is, his love and presence **can wash it away** and **change your heart** so you don't want it any more.

**Bring the glory of God into your life** and it will drive out the ugly hold sin has over you!

(Conclusion)

Summit Church:

- Are we a **praying people**?
- Are we **known** as a people of prayer for all nations?
- Do we **glorify God by** his answers to prayer, and do we lead other people to hope in God and pray to him?
  
- This is the best thing we can do **for missions**:
  - (I think of the statement by **Andrew Murray**, *"The man who mobilizes the Christian church to pray will make the greatest contribution to world evangelization in history."* Are you praying for that in your small group?)
- The best thing we can do **for evangelism**:
  - **E.M. Bounds** "We should never talk to men about God more than we talk to God about men!"
- It's the **secret of our power** in the pulpit:
  - **Boiler room**
- It's the **most important part of our ministries**:
  - **End of the service**

