“Calling On God”

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Introduction:

[Show video of President Reagan and quoting of Scripture Text]

We will never be the strong disciples of Christ we are called to be unless we are in constant communication with the living God.

Key Text: 2 Chronicles 7:14

Solomon was the son of King David. King David was passionate about building the Temple in Jerusalem for God, but God told David that his son would be the one to build it. In 2 Chronicles 1-9 you will read about the reign of King Solomon.

In Chapters 2-5 you read where Solomon has built the Temple where the presence of God would dwell. From chapter 5:2-7:10 you read of the dedication of the Temple.

When you get to Chapter 7:11-22 you will read of God declaring what He will bless and what He will curse. The Lord appears to Solomon and assures Him that the temple pleases Him. In verse 13 God encourages Solomon by saying that if His judgment should come upon Israel for sin, they needed only to turn to the Lord, repent in humility, and they would find forgiveness and restoration.

God calls you to pray, but you need to understand three principles God teaches about prayer in this verse.
When you determine you are going to be in constant communication with the living God then…

1.) There is a condition you must demonstrate: Verse 14a

Note: “and My people” clearly the relationship is established here. God calls us to be a praying people. I am so grateful that in Christ we belong to Holy God!

Read: I love what the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 14:8, “If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”

God called Israel to be His people. And God calls all of us who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to be His people. God calls us to pray, but at the core of our prayers personally and corporately, is a condition we must demonstrate.

Point: We must demonstrate a humble condition before Holy God as we go to Him in prayer. Humility before God not pride is what gains the attention of God.

Illustration:

I read about a loudmouth mechanic, who was removing the cylinder heads from the motor of a car when he spotted a famous heart surgeon who was standing off to the side, waiting for the service manager to come take a look at his Mercedes.

Morris shouted across the garage, "Hey Doc! Is dat you? Come on ova’ here a minute."

The famous surgeon, a bit surprised, walked over to where Morris the mechanic was working on the car. Morris straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag, and asked argumentatively, "So, Mr. Fancy Doctor, look at dis here work. I ALSO open hearts, take valves out, grind ’em, put in new parts, and when I finish dis baby will purr like a kitten. So how come you get da big bucks, when you an’ me is doing basically da same work?"
The surgeon leaned over and whispered to Morris the loudmouth mechanic, "Try doing it with the engine running."

**Point:** That man saw his position differently. He was certainly humbled. We need to see our position correctly as well.

**Read:** The apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5:6-7, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, because He cares about you."

God teaches us here in this verse that if we want forgiveness of sin and our fellowship to be right with Him then our condition must be one of humility!

**Point:** Think about it. An athlete has to be humble if they are going to hear clearly and learn from their coach. God is leading us and we must humbly listen to Him and follow His direction.

If you want the Spirit of God to fill you so that you long for Christ like never before, so that you look for Christ to be your goal in life, then you must demonstrate the condition of humility!

If we want the Spirit of God to fill our congregation then we must be a people that demonstrate the condition of humility before Holy God. We must depend upon Him. And when we sin, we must confess it before Him with a humble heart. He will heal us!

If we want the blessing of God upon our nation then we must humble ourselves before Holy God and He will hear us!

**Illustration:**
During the Great Awakening, when the Spirit of God revived much of our nation’s early faith, **Jonathan Edwards was presiding over a massive prayer meeting. Eight hundred men prayed with him.** Into that meeting a woman sent a message asking the men to pray for her husband. The note described a man who had become unloving, prideful, and difficult.

Edwards read the message in private and then, thinking that perhaps the man described was present, made a bold request. Edwards read the note to 800 men. **Then he asked if the man who had been described would raise his hand, so that the whole assembly could pray for him. Three hundred men raised their hands.**

**Point:** We gain the attention of God like never before when we humble ourselves. And humility is the condition that we need to demonstrate if we are to see the fire of God stir in our hearts!

When you determine you are going to be in constant communication with the living God then…

**2.) There is a conversation you must cultivate: Verse 14**

Once you have determined to demonstrate humility before holy God, you need to determine to cultivate the conversation with God that prayer really is. Praying is not something just to do when you are in trouble.

**Point:** In its simplest form prayer is communication with God.

**Quote:** I love what Dr. Bill Bright said about prayer, “**Real prayer is expressing our devotion to our heavenly Father, inviting Him to talk to us as we talk to Him.**”

**Point:** What is so exciting is that because of Jesus Christ, every follower of Christ has the privilege of talking with God!
Read: I love what James writes in chapter 5:13-16. He writes, “Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray over him after anointing him with olive oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The intense prayer of the righteous is very powerful.”

Point: We are challenged to pray. We can pray and Jesus provides the personal invitation to pray. Through Jesus we can talk with God, hear from God!

Illustration:

My oldest daughter had her tenth birthday recently. She wanted a text messaging set she had seen at a store really bad. So she went out and used her birthday money to get the text messaging machines. She and one of her friends were so excited to use them. I see them go into different rooms in the house.

They come into the living room and I notice that they are standing just a few feet from each other and texting each other! I thought, “You are a few feet from each other. Can’t you just talk? You spent money on something that doesn’t even work.”

Great news! We CAN talk to God. Solomon had built a temple for Holy God to dwell. And while they could still pray to Holy God, there was not the intimacy with God we can now enjoy through Jesus Christ.

Read: I love what the author of Hebrews says in 10:19-20a, “Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He has inaugurated for us...”
We don’t have to go to a priest, we have a great High Priest in Jesus, and because we are cleansed by His sinless blood we can know God in a personal way. Cultivating this conversation with God is the only way we can maintain a passion for God.

**Read:** I love Dr. Johnny Hunt. He is the pastor of the great First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Georgia. He is a passionate man of God and passionate preacher for God.

What various hindrances we meet,  
In coming to the mercy seat!  
Yet he who knows the worth of prayer,  
Wishes often to be there.

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,  
And climbs the ladder Jacob saw,  
Gives exercise to faith and love,  
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian’s armor bright,  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide,  
Success was found on Israel’s side,  
But when, through weariness, they failed,  
That moment Amalek prevailed.

Have you no words? Ah, think again!  
Words flow apace when you complain,  
And fill your fellow creature’s ear  
With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent  
To heaven in supplication sent,  
Your cheerful song would oftener be,
“Hear what the Lord has done for me!”

**Point:** If you want courage and boldness for God, if you desire intimacy with God, if you want to stand against the devil’s attacks, if you want to be full of a heart of praise, then you must cultivate this conversation called prayer! Do this today!

When you determine you are going to be in constant communication with the living God then…

3.) **There is a cost you must not underestimate: Verse 14c**

With an Olympic athlete the coach will often ask the athlete to do something that will cost them. It can be difficult. It can be to do something different. The same is true with Holy God. He will often tell us to do something that can change our lives.

God told Solomon to “**turn from their evil ways**”.

**Personally:** There is a cost when you are called to turn from your sinful habits. There is a cost when you are called to turn from selfishness. There is a cost to put Jesus in charge of your life so that you don’t lead, He leads!

**Think About It:**

- God calls us to turn from sin: pornography, stealing, lying, etc.
- God might call you to make a move in your job or some other opportunity.
- God might call you to full-time ministry.
- God might call you to a mission trip.
- God calls each of us to share our faith.

The bottom-line is that we need to pray so He can speak clearly into our lives and we can live in obedience to Him.
**Point:** God promised Solomon that if he personally and that collectively as a people, they would pray and seek the Lord then God would forgive them, heal them, and make them what they were called out to be. God will do the same for you and us as a church if we will be serious about calling upon the Lord in prayer.

**Quote:**

Charles Spurgeon once said, “Prayer pulls the rope down below, and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give only an occasional jerk at the rope. But he who communicates with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all his might.”

Every follower of Christ needs to be in constant communication with the Living God. There is great power, protection, and understanding when we pray.

**Concluding Illustration:**

Jim Cymbala, in his book “Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire”, details the miraculous growth of the Brooklyn Tabernacle because of its dedication to prayer. In 1972 he was asked to pastor part-time a small church in a shabby two-story building on Atlantic Avenue in New York City. The location was bad. The people were few. The facilities were falling apart. In fact, he tells about how a pew broke one Sunday night, spilling several people onto the floor as he preached.

As he prayed one day about what to do, Cymbala writes that he sensed God speaking: “If you and your wife will lead my people to pray and call upon my name, you will never lack for something fresh to preach. I will supply all the money that’s needed, both for the church and for your family, and you will never have a building large enough to contain the crowds I will send in response.”

He went back to the church and told them that from that moment on the health of the church would be measured by its Tuesday night prayer meeting. That first night 15 people came. God
began to move. The church grew. The prayer meeting became larger. They were forced three times to seek larger facilities. By 1985 they were running 1600 each Sunday service. Hundreds came to the Tuesday night prayer meeting. God brought miraculous conversions.

Today, besides the Tuesday meeting, there is a prayer ministry in which each hour of each day of the week, someone is in prayer for the church and its pastor. Its choir is world famous. Its pastor is asked to preach all over the world. But most importantly, lives are being drastically changed by the power of God.

**Conclusion:**

**Unbeliever**, you can go to God today, humble yourself, call upon Jesus to save you from your sins, and experience the grace of God. The Spirit of God will fill you and cause you to become alive in Christ.

**Believer**, how is your spiritual condition today? Are you humble before God or full of pride? Have you been cultivating your conversation with the Lord? Is there anything you need to turn from?

**Church family**, we have much to go to God with. We have incredible opportunities before us with land, buildings, ministry development, and standing strong against Satan’s schemes.