

Prayer and Revival

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{NOTE: The actual oral sermon and video recording may vary significantly and even materially from these notes, but this “transcript” gives you a general idea of the direction of the message.}

{Title slide—1} Shabbat shalom, brothers and sisters. With the Southern New Hampshire Regional Nights of United Extraordinary Prayer and Worship coming to our own house at 7 p.m. on March 1, the LORD prompted me to offer some Scriptural encouragement to prepare your hearts for that evening of spiritual warfare as well as the Spring Feasts that will follow soon afterward. I pray: Come LORD Yeshua! Lead us in the Way you will us to go! Now, it's really been more than a year since we've focused on spiritual warfare as a topic here at First Fruits. With the “Community” series, followed by the “Elementary Principles of Messiah Yeshua” series, and now the “Who is Yeshua the Messiah?” series, which we're not quite done with, spiritual warfare has not been center stage—and that's OK. We've been solidifying who we are as a community, specifically that our foundation is in Messiah Yeshua and following the commandments He gave us. These are essential first steps to set up our growth and development as a faith community that is truly seeking the LORD. We need to dig deep roots in the Truth and make sure this tree is well nourished before we can begin branching out to multiply fruit for God's kingdom. That being said, I have some expectation that God is getting ready to sprout some of our branches, and because of that, we're going to need to return to the topic of spiritual warfare very soon. Now, in order to engage in successful spiritual warfare against the enemies of God, we're going to need to lay down a culture of prayer here that does not waver. It has to become yet another firm foundation for us. A solid prayer culture is going to keep our lines of communication open with the LORD always, so He can lead us in any and all of our upcoming battles. When absolutely everything we do here is united in purpose and based on the living commandments of Messiah Yeshua through His Holy Spirit, powered in prayer, we will be ready for the LORD to use us for even greater purposes. With that said, today I'm hoping to explain why prayer is essential for the growth of

God's kingdom, and maybe even another revival, if He wills it, and why—either way—we need to take part in what God is doing during these days.

{Next slide—2} Besides what I do privately with my family and what you've seen me teach here at church—specifically regarding the Truth of Yeshua's identity as our LORD and our God and our calling to show our love for Him by living in obedience to His commandments—I also have been cultivating an emphasis on discipleship within the ministry. Our community has to have a focus on training up other men to lead so we can work together to multiply the faith. I've personally been leading several men through a "Bondage Breaker" discipleship course and "The Steps to Freedom in Christ," by Neil T. Anderson, because deliverance is the first step to true discipleship in Yeshua. We begin to truly listen to what God is saying about us when we stop listening to the lies of the enemy. The next step is learning our identity in Messiah through the Truth of God's Word, and I work to do that corporally through the messages we give here each Shabbat as well as through small group discipleship. For the men, we have the "Mighty Men" discipleship course by Corner Fringe Ministries, and I'm invested in taking several men through this course and overseeing other leaders. Several of our men here are involved under those other leaders, and so we're off to a good start cultivating a rich environment for growth. I'm still calling on one or more of our ladies to get connected with "the Women of Valor" discipleship course at Corner Fringe so she or they can then lead the sisters here. Such discipleship has got to be another component of how we live out our faith here at First Fruits. Such focus is the only way we're going to multiply. Recently, the idea of spiritual revival has begun to appear on our metaphorical horizon, and if revival comes truly from the LORD, the multiplication will happen quickly and we are going to need to be ready for it. I recently returned from the "Raise the Standard" revival at the Bridge Fellowship in Brenham, Texas, and thankfully all the core teachings are now available on our YouTube page and I've also compiled them together in our weekly bulletin. Please watch them. They help to set up a firm foundation in Yeshua and His Word. And now that we're preparing to host a prayer and worship night here as part of the New England Revival Covenant on March 1, it's important that we talk about what it's going to take for revival to truly spring up here in the Granite State. First of all, we have to be prepared to hold off the attacks of the enemy. While each of our efforts to pursue the Truth of God's Word and build an authentic relationship with Yeshua bring great blessing to the glory of God, these victories enrage the enemy. Remember what we've learned from Revelation 12:17, where we read: "the dragon was enraged with the woman [referring to Israel, who gave birth to Yeshua], and he [therefore] went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Messiah Yeshua."

Those of us who are leaning in to the LORD and seeking Him in all His ways have made ourselves the target of the devil. And let me tell you, the past few months have brought on a constant onslaught of spiritual attacks against me personally, and many of you have shared your own experiences with me, also. This past week has been particularly difficult. The only thing that will help us endure through such trials is an authentic relationship with Yeshua and hope in God's Word, and so this has got to be our focus. The LORD warned that we'd have tribulation in this life. He said we'd be chastened. He said such challenges are meant to train us up in righteousness and make us stronger, preparing us for what's next. He instructed us to pick up our armor and fight, while relying on Him for certain victory, but this takes faith, and enduring faith is fully dependent on prayer. In fact, Yeshua commanded us to turn to Him in diligent, persistent prayer to resist every one of the enemy's attacks. We certainly have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed, but I don't want to rule that out as something that might be coming. Even if it's not, my point is this: Whether we're seeking revival that leads to blessing for our state and nation or revival that leads to further persecution and tribulation, there's literally one thing that will bring it about and sustain us through it. We need to be praying! We need to be praying for one another. We need to be praying for our leaders. We need to be praying for our community, both on the ground here in New Hampshire and also all around the nation and the world. It's prayer that will help us endure in our faithfulness until the end. There is nothing more important for us to do, and if we aren't doing it, we're letting the enemy win. Think about prayer as our primary communication channel with our Commander in Chief, who is Yeshua the Messiah. In any war, communications are key. Our prayers keep us connected with Yeshua in the intimate relationship He's promised, and when we keep these lines open, He helps us have victory in every battle. We have to understand, then, that the enemy is going to do everything he can to separate us from our communications with Yeshua, because this is how he gains ground. In the midst of such disruption, we need to double down in prayer. This is how we stay connected. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, so long as we ourselves remain faithful to Yeshua and keep the connection open.

{Next slide—3} So we need to pray and we need to prepare to pray. There's a short month ahead of us; the prayer night for revival that we're co-hosting with Calvary Chapel on March 1 is only three weeks and a day from now. These prayer nights that bring together Bible-believing Christians from many different traditions are planned for the first evening of each month, and we



ought to attend each of them unless they fall on a Holy Day or a Sabbath, in which case we ought to be here. A few of us have attended the first two of these meetings this year, and we can tell you that these meetings have been powerful encounters with the Holy Spirit of God. The LORD is calling for us to pursue Him as one united body, and I for one am aching to bring the Body of Messiah together in pursuit of a deeper relationship with Yeshua and the Truth of His Word. This is the type of revival that will gain ground for the Kingdom of God. Now, I intend to get back to our sermon series next week, but the LORD has led me to speak about prayer this week so we can begin practicing how we ought to pray together as a community in the days and weeks ahead, because prayer is essential for revival. On March 1, I want us to be ready to focus on deliverance in Yeshua for revival of the Christian faith; I want us to learn to persistently ask the LORD to show us our next steps; and I want us to be willing to wait for His answer with patient expectation. The LORD is faithful, and He will lead us when we diligently seek Him in the Way He wants us to go. As we transition into today's message, then, I want to share with you a brief commentary from R.A. Torrey, an evangelist who lived in the late 1800s and early 1900s, because this is what I'm going to use to frame the rest of today's message. While you know I don't often use commentaries in my teaching, I believe Torrey's words are worthy to share for two reasons: I believe he's right, which I hope to show you, and I think his inspired instruction is just what we ought to do to bring revival to our land. He said: "I can give a prescription that will bring a revival to any church or community or any city on earth. First, let a few Christians (they need not be many) get thoroughly right with God themselves. This is the prime essential. If this is not done, the rest that I am to say will come to nothing. Second, let them bind themselves together in a prayer group to pray for a revival until God opens the heavens and comes down. Third, let them put themselves at the disposal of God for Him to use as He sees fit in winning others to Christ. That is all!" (Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 1152.)

{Next slide—4} And so, I believe we've spent a lot of time in this ministry exploring how to "get thoroughly right with God," and I do think there are at least a "few Christians" that gather here at First Fruits Ministries. As R.A. Torrey noted, "this is the prime essential. If this is not done, the rest that I am to say will come to nothing." I agree. There are a few dynamics to this statement that I want to touch on before we get into the second part of his prescription. This is review, so I'm only going to put a few of the verses I'm covering in this section up on the screen. Please pay attention. In order to "get thoroughly right with God," there is a testimony of two that's needed. And according to Revelation 14:12, the saints endure until Yeshua returns by keeping the

commandments of God and their faith in Yeshua. According to Paul in Romans 10:9, we are saved by grace by confessing with our mouth that Yeshua is LORD and believing in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead. Our hope is in His living promise that He will return to bring His faithful followers into His Kingdom. The Apostle John related these principles to our topic today in 1st John 3. Starting in verse 18, we read: “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” In James’s version, we must be “doers of the Word, not hearers only, deceiving ourselves.” Paul explained in Romans 6 that our faith in Yeshua ought to drive us to become “slaves of righteousness,” rather than “slaves to sin.” The grace of God ought to lead us to repentance—to follow the one who saved us. It goes deeper than our actions, though. Continuing in John, we can see that God will also judge our hearts’ intentions to follow Yeshua, just as the LORD explained in Matthew 5. There Yeshua said adultery includes looking at a woman with lust and murder includes harboring anger. We have to avoid even these temptations. Continuing in 1st John 3, verse 19, we read: “And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.” In other words, if we have truly accepted Yeshua, His Holy Spirit dwells within us and guides us according to God’s will. The thoughts and intentions of our hearts will be guided according to God’s will and God Himself will help us. When we have such hearts that are pleasing to the LORD, this is the demonstrable faith that leads to the effectiveness of our prayers. John confirmed this. Continuing in verse 22, we read: “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” This is akin to what Yeshua explained in Matthew 21:21: “If you have faith and do not doubt ... if you say to this mountain, ‘be removed and cast into the sea,’ it will be done.” Likewise, we read in James 1:5-6 that we ought to ask for wisdom, which the LORD will give “liberally and without reproach,” so long as we ask “in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.” And so we ought to understand that God will hear our prayers when we stand on the firm foundation of faithfulness, initiated by God’s grace. John further confirmed this in verse 23, where we read: “And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Yeshua the Messiah and love one another, as He gave us commandment.” Recall what John wrote in his second letter, verse 6: “This is love, that we walk according to His commandments.” Recall that Yeshua, according to John 14:15, said: “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” The testimony of two, faith in Yeshua and obedience to God’s will, serves as a firm foundation to a successful prayer life. It is our core focus at First Fruits Ministries to ensure each of our members has a mastery of these ideas,

and when we fully comprehend these Truths we are well on our way to fulfilling the first part of Torrey's "prescription" for revival.

{Next slide—5} Just to make sure you see the need for faith and righteousness to precede our effective prayer life, I want to show you a few additional passages that confirm this reality before we move on. In Psalm 34, verses 15-18, we read: "The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit." And so we ought to recognize that the LORD hears those who are humble, submitting themselves to His identity as the Most High God who has redeemed us and blessed us with His righteous commandments. He saves us when we turn toward His Way in Yeshua, rejecting the way of the world. Though we will not be without troubles in this life, when we endure in our faithfulness, God will hear our prayers and deliver us from every one of them. On the contrary, the LORD will not hear the prayers of those who practice lawlessness. The LORD confirms this understanding with two very short Proverbs that we ought to review. In Proverbs 15:29, we read: "The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous." And in Proverbs 28:9, we read: "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." I hope these passages are crystalizing the idea that our hearts truly need to be "thoroughly right with God," for without this there is no hope for revival. If we surrender ourselves to God's will He will hear our prayers and deliver us.

{Next slide—6} Let's look at two additional passages that highlight just how significant this principle is for us in our prayer lives, and how God applies it even now. God is searching our hearts and our daily lives in every way to determine whether we truly know Him, or not. The way we treat others, especially those who are in our care, directly influences whether God is going to hear our prayers. Consider the severity of 1st Peter 3:7, where we read: "Husbands, likewise, dwell with [your wives] with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." Please don't read this and believe it's OK for a husband to walk away from the faith on account of his wife's disbelief—that is not what Peter is teaching. Consult 1st Corinthians 7 for guidance in this regard. On the contrary, Peter IS teaching that husbands ought to be gentle with their believing wives, caring for their needs first, just as Yeshua cared about His disciples first by giving up His life so that we might be saved. If we treat our wives harshly, lording our authority over them—men listen: God is not going to hear our

prayers. I think we are all guilty of this from time to time, so let us be humble and repent. The LORD has set a high bar for us, but it is a standard we ought to follow. And just to be clear women, you likewise ought to be humble before your husbands. This principle doesn't just apply to our spouse, though, but also our children, and if we are discipling others in the faith community, it applies to those in our care within the church, too. In Matthew 20, verses 25-28, Yeshua explained: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." While this latter passage does not directly relate to prayer, we certainly can make the connection. Our righteous King has instructed us to follow Him, by way of example, even giving up our own lives for the good of our spouse, our children and any disciples who happen to be in our care. As a pastor, this teaching weighs heavy on my heart, because God will not help us—He will not build this house—if I or any other leaders here do not put service to the people of the congregation first. Thank God for His mercy and grace. When our hearts turn toward repentance through humility, the LORD will forgive and heal any areas where we have fallen short, but we ought to be attentive to examine ourselves in this. Our prayers will be answered when we humble ourselves before the LORD and seek His ways above our own. This ought to be a model for all leadership at First Fruits, and it also ought to be a model for each of us when we go out to minister to those who aren't yet among us. This is how our prayers will lead to multiplication. In explaining this principle, it's critically important to point out a caveat to make sure there's no confusion. In 1st John 2, the Apostle explained that those who love the world or the things in it do not know God. He said those who fall victim to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life" are operating in the spirit of "antichrist." Just as we must be humble and contrite before the LORD, so must everyone else who comes in to worship and pray with us, or the willfully sinful members could hinder the prayers of the whole congregation. As we've often studied in 1st Corinthians 5, we ought to remove those from among us who are practicing lawlessness, or let them go out on their own. In our humility, we first ought to consider our obedience to God and only afterward our love toward one another. We cannot dwell among those who glorify evil or refuse to turn from it. In verse 19, John explained: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." We ought to discern that Yeshua's call for us to be humble servants does not mean we ought to cater to those who refuse to turn from their sins. One of a pastor's roles is to help discern who is coming in to pursue

the LORD in all His ways, and those who are not ought to be watched, corrected, and at times, asked to leave, to protect the congregation.

{Next slide—7} I suppose these last statements help to set up the second part of this first section. Recall again, the prescription for success in revival is that “a few Christians (they need not be many) get thoroughly right with God.” And so, allow me to plainly state: It is my hope that this body, First Fruits Ministries, is working toward this very thing. Because we are also a part of Corner Fringe Ministries and the affiliate network, you can be assured that this is also the wider community's greatest hope. And in seeking to achieve this standard, we also have to be mindful of those who are falling short. Like our God, we ought to be humble, patient, kind and gentle, seeking to meet people where they're at and lead them toward the righteous path. At the same time, we also have to discern when people are actively rebelling against our efforts and make sure they do not affect the rest of the congregation. This is the area where we need to exercise the most discernment. In Paul's second letter to Timothy, chapter 2, verses 19-26, the apostle gave his own disciple some guidelines that are worthy of our contemplation. We read: “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The LORD knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Messiah depart from iniquity.’” In other words, everyone who comes in here ought to be seeking the LORD and His righteous path. As Paul continues in the passage, we read: “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” I just want to pause here and point out that our usefulness for the LORD, which is the end goal of our prayers, is dependent on our faithful obedience to His will. Those who do not seek righteousness are still useful, but only as an example of what path not to take. These are the ones who leave in dishonor, seeking their own ways instead of the ways of God. As Paul continues, this becomes apparent. We read: “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the LORD out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the LORD must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” And so, our goal ought to be gentle correction with humility and kindness. We should not be focused on doubtful things that cause strife, but rather on the Way of Yeshua. This dynamic will serve us well as we engage with Christians from other denominations for prayer. Our goal ought to be to

seek the LORD together, not to cause strife. By our gentle example, we might lead some of them to a greater appreciation for the commandments of God, but we're not going to lead anyone to obedience with pompous opposition to their ideas in a way that causes strife. This applies to what we're doing with the New England Revival Covenant. Let us be among the "few Christians" who are "getting thoroughly right with God," but let us not do this with pride, for we too are sinners who need to maintain humble and contrite hearts. Those who are coming in to pray with us are also seeking to "get thoroughly right with God." Revival will come when we join arms with those who are seeking the righteousness of Christ by coming alongside them. Let our prayers and example gently demonstrate the Way of Christ, and let the Holy Spirit do the rest. Clearly, we'll draw a line at blatant lawlessness or syncretism but outside of this our hearts ought to be focused on the unity we all share in the LORD.

{Next slide—8} And this leads us to the second and third principles that R.A. Torrey expressed. First, those of us who are truly seeking righteousness in Yeshua ought to "bind ourselves together in a prayer group to pray for a revival until God opens the heavens and comes down." This is what I am proposing we do here at First Fruits Ministries with one another first, and I also believe we should join with our brothers and sisters from the various denominations to call upon the LORD together. The New England Revival Covenant will be successful if we pray for the LORD to lead through each of us and show us the way He wants us all to go, with the humility of heart to understand that none of us has already "attained" the Kingdom of God. As Paul said in Philippians 3:12-14, we ought to "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Messiah Yeshua." The idea behind this movement is to come together periodically outside of our regular Sabbath gathering, not to bring everyone together under one set of traditions but under the upward call of Christ. There are certain nonnegotiable principles for us to stand by—we're not going to participate in ceremonies that God has not commanded or that He has specifically prohibited, we're not going to pray outside of our purview, while we're absolutely going to pray according to God's Word in obedience to His commandments, in the name of Yeshua, without any doubting. With all that being said, we ought to come together with other faithful followers of Yeshua, who are—just like us—somewhere along the path our LORD laid out, and pray diligently with persistence for the LORD to further sanctify us all. I'm certain that each and every one of us here, as well as each and every member of every participating church, has something that we're still working to get right before God. As Paul said in 2nd Corinthians 2:15, we are all offering the "aroma of Messiah to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing." This means that our unity in prayer, so long as we come together whole heartedly, is going

to bring further sanctification to each of us who is seeking the LORD. At the same time, the rest of the world is going to notice, and if we persist in this effort there may even come a time where we face active opposition. The aroma of Messiah is not pleasing to those who are perishing, but even for them we ought to pray that by our example they might come to know the LORD. Ultimately, we are coming together to seek the perfection of the LORD together, exhorting each other in the comfort of the LORD's grace that covers our imperfections that we're still working on, and this is something we ought to celebrate. We ought to continue, as Paul said in Philippians 2:12-13, to "work out [our] salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in [us], both to will and to work for His good pleasure." When we pursue the LORD together for our own sanctification, we also ought to pray persistently that the LORD will expand His Kingdom through us, adding brothers and sisters among us just like He has done during so many prior revivals. In this way, our persistent prayers put us at Yeshua's disposal to use us as He sees fit to win others over to Him. This is what R.A. Torrey explained as the end goal of his prescription for revival.

{Next slide—9} As we consider Torrey's second and third principles together—that our persistent prayers ought to lead us to a place of surrender so the LORD can use us to expand His Kingdom—I think it's critical for us to thoroughly study the LORD's prayer in the Gospel of Luke, because it speaks to the heart of the matter. And so, let's get started. Yeshua's disciples asked Him, saying, "LORD, teach us to pray...", and this is how He began in Luke 11, verse 2: "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven." And so, our first objective in prayer is to recognize the recipient of our prayer: God Most High, the Holy One who created the Heavens and the Earth and everything in them. He is one in being with the Son, and so we ought to pray in Yeshua's name. Next, we ought to pray for God's will to be done rather than our own, and it is in this very point that we express our humility and surrender to our King. When we pray according to the LORD's will, we're reminded of Yeshua's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, which He gave us as yet another example of how to pray. In Luke 22, verses 40-42, we read: "When [Yeshua] came to the place, He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.' And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.'" And so, the first thing I want to point out is demonstrated in Hebrews 4:15, where we read: "We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Here in the garden, the LORD exemplified prayer to help us overcome temptation, even in the face of great suffering, and yet He overcame it by

surrendering to the will of the Father as we also ought to overcome the temptations we face. Rather than walk away from the cross, the LORD prayed “not My will, but Yours, be done,” and so too must we. We will have victory over the world, over the temptation to sin, and over all unrighteousness when we persistently pray according to the Father’s will. The Apostle explained in 1st John 5:14, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” It is certainly the Father’s will that we walk righteously before Him; therefore, praying for God’s will to be done in our lives ought to result in righteousness. This is the wisdom that James said God would give liberally when we ask with faith and no doubting, and this is confirmed in James 4:7, where we read: “Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Prayers according to the LORD’s will are those prayers that persistently ask Him to sanctify us according to His commandments, and these are the prayers that ultimately lead to revival—both in us, in our local church community, and in the church as a whole.

{Next slide—10} As the LORD’s prayer continues into verse 3, we read: “Give us day by day our daily bread.” While this prayer certainly could pertain to our daily provisions in the flesh, it’s hard to justify this interpretation considering what Yeshua told His disciples in Matthew 6, verses 25-26, where we read: “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” It’s clear that the LORD has already provided our provision, and while we certainly ought to engage Him in conversation to thank Him for our food and clothing, if for some reason we’re lacking these essentials we ought to ask whether we have gone astray from what the LORD has taught us to do. And that leads us to what I believe the LORD was actually instructing us to pray, which can be shown in yet another example from Luke 4, verses 3-4. In the wilderness, when Yeshua had fasted for 40 days, the devil tempted Him by questioning His identity as the Son of God. We read: “And the devil said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’ But Yeshua answered him, saying, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’” Here’s the lesson: when we are tempted by the devil to deny Yeshua’s identity as the Son of God or when He tempts us to act outside of God’s will to violate God’s commandments, our prayer ought to be focused on seeking the Word of God, because it provides us with the Way of eternal life. Yeshua was not seeking physical bread, but rather “every Word of God.” His rebuke of the devil’s temptation was a direct quotation from Deuteronomy 8:3. Interestingly, the verse right before it reads as follows: “And

you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.” This is the daily bread we ought to ask for in prayer. Our prayers ought to ask the LORD for the wisdom we need from His Word so that we might walk righteously before Him and avoid the temptations of the devil. When we come together to pray, we ought to pray for the LORD to further reveal His Word to us, so that we can embrace it and continue along His narrow path to life.

{Next slide—11} This is what the LORD meant when He said in Matthew 7:7-11, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” What is good other than every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God? We read in Genesis 1 that everything the LORD created was good. Likewise, He said in Jeremiah 29:11-13, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” Indeed, when we seek the LORD and His will, which is articulated by His written Word and exemplified by His living Word, the LORD will provide us with everything that is good. When we humble ourselves before the LORD and seek His Way with everything we have, He will certainly listen to our prayers and help us. He is a good, good Father.

{Next slide—12} Continuing in the prayer then, we can see the humility and repentance come through that we spoke about earlier. Even though we might persistently pray for the Word of the LORD to guide us, we will all fall short of the glory of God at one point or other. For this reason, we ought to be careful to take the plank out of our own eye before we look to point out the speck in our brothers’ eye, as Yeshua said. And this is why we ought to pray, according to verse 4, “forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” Each of the previous sections that make up the LORD’s prayer already seek the LORD to help us avoid temptation, but now Yeshua presented the idea directly: “Lead us not into temptation.” We might wonder, then, how does this idea work in conjunction with James 1, verses 13-14, which on the surface seems to contradict it? We read: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God;’ for God

cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” Simply put: It’s not a contradiction, but actually helps us further understand the prayer. I don’t have room to show you the passage, but remember what Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:12, that we “do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against ... the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” The devil, the evil one, as referenced in the prayer, is the one who tempts us. The prayer is once again seeking the will of God to help us avoid falling into the devil’s traps. The passage in James explains that our temptation takes root when we are drawn away by our own desires because of the evil one’s enticement. Thus, Yeshua’s model prayer teaches us to seek deliverance from temptation in the Word of Truth while offering forgiveness to others for falling short, as we have also done. If we look at the version of the LORD’s prayer in Matthew 6, this truth becomes even more critical. We can see as the prayer ends, the LORD explained there in verses 14-15: “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” This is serious. When we forgive others of their sins against us and against God, we actually release the enemy’s hold on our hearts, which manifests in “resentment” and “bitterness.” We can’t harbor such evil inside of us and expect to receive the forgiveness for our own sins. And so we should return to the point discussed earlier, which Paul made clear in Ephesians 4:32-5:1, “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Messiah forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.” Our prayers ought to seek to forgive those who have wronged us as we seek forgiveness for wronging others. It is in this way that we can gently lead others into the faith and the righteous Way of Yeshua. It is in this way that we ought to follow Christ. If our prayers are persistently seeking forgiveness, one humble and contrite person toward another humble and contrite person, we will begin to walk ever closer to the righteousness in prayer that leads to revival.

{Next slide—13} Let’s continue to contemplate one more aspect of the LORD’s prayer in Luke’s Gospel. It’s clear that this is a prayer of humility that seeks the Father’s will for our lives according to His Word. It’s clear that the LORD has asked us to seek Him with all of our hearts, but what does that mean in practice? When we continue past the prayer into Luke 11, verses 5-13, the final and most important part of the prayer surfaces. There we read: “And [Yeshua] said to them, ‘Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and

my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"" The bottom line is this: Our prayers must be persistent as we ask for the Father's will to help us overcome temptation. We're not just going to pray once for righteousness and suddenly become perfect. Our walk with God is meant to take every moment of our lives until our death or until He comes, and until then we ought to be praying and getting closer to Yeshua. We receive the Holy Spirit to help us, Yeshua said in John 14:15-18, when we love Him and keep His commandments. When we persistently pray for the Father's will to be done in our lives, this is when He gives the Holy Spirit to help us. He desires our constant interaction. He desires all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. He desires us to surrender everything to His will, and when we make this choice, especially with persistent prayer, He blesses us eternally.

{Next slide—14} How much more will the LORD bless us when we come in together as a Body and pray for one another in this very same way—when we pray for the LORD's will to be done for our brothers and sisters, for their spouses and children, for our church, and for all of the Christian churches around us and in the whole world? He said in John 13, verses 34-35: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Shouldn't we come together to pray, even with those who have slightly different traditions than we do, on account of our love for one another? How could we do otherwise considering this exhortation from the LORD? When we come together and pray persistently for the LORD's will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven, this is when we seek to get thoroughly right with God, this is when we bind ourselves together in prayer for revival, and this is when we surrender ourselves to whatever the LORD desires for us, for it is God who uses us according to His pleasure to bring others into the faith. He commanded us to go and make disciples and to teach them all the commandments of God, and this brothers and sisters is why we need to pray—so that we do not enter temptation to do anything else besides His will in this. When today we look outside these church doors at the world and see enemies all around us—those who have fallen victim to the devil's temptations

—are we doing what the LORD commanded us to do? Are we praying for the LORD's will to be done in us, as it is done in Heaven? In Matthew 5:43-48, Yeshua said: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." Paul said in 1st Thessalonians 5:17, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing." If we are committed to doing this, then even our enemies might come in and humble themselves to walk in the Way of Christ. Can we expect a revival to occur any other way? Prayer for our enemies to come to truly know Yeshua ought to be our top priority. As Peter wrote in 2nd Peter 3:9, the LORD is "long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance." The LORD's will is for everyone to know Him, and He has given us a great commission to join Him in praying for His will. This doesn't mean that everyone will make the choice to come in, but we certainly ought to desire this for them! Should we not desire the same thing that God desires—the one who loves us and longs to bless us?

{Next slide—15} I wish I had time to give you some Scriptural examples today, but I'm going to need to close here in a few moments, so let me just say this: When we pray persistently for all people, for the LORD's will to be done in their lives, the LORD is going to respond positively to that and revival becomes more likely. In 2nd Chronicles 7:14, the LORD said: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." He was referring to the people of Judah returning to their land from captivity in this verse, but prophetically this truth applies to us. Are we not called Christians after Jesus the Christ or Messianic believers after Yeshua our Messiah? If we seek the face of God in humility and repentance, He has promised to bring forgiveness and revival. Remember how Yeshua said in Luke 11, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" In the early part of Acts, the risen Messiah said to His disciples in chapter 1 verse 8: "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." The disciples returned to Jerusalem and spent days upon days praying in the

upper room for the LORD's will to be done. Then on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell upon them and from that point forward, the early church spread from 110 to 3,000, and then a multitude beyond our ability to count. Today, the Gospel of Christ stands firmly as the only Truth that brings hope to those who are lost, and blessing to those who are caught up in the bondage of temptation. The Holy Spirit leads followers of Yeshua in freedom. And according to Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control." With prayer, these fruits will continue to bloom from each of us here at First Fruits Ministries. With persistent prayer, these fruits will multiply in the community around us, and only God knows how far the love of God will spread. We need to be persistently praying for God's will in this way, so that each of us can be a minister of reconciliation for Yeshua in the world around us and shine the light of God's Truth until the darkness is no more. Brothers and sisters, I am calling on each of us to develop a prayer life here in this community so these words, which I know to be God's will, become reality.

{Next slide—16} As R.A. Torrey said, revival begins with just a few of us getting fully right with God, turning to persistent prayer for God's will to be done in us so that He can reach His people through us to spread His Kingdom throughout the land. In another exhortation, Torrey put these same principles in different words, and I'm going to leave you with this today. He wrote: "When any church can be brought to the place where they will recognize their need of the Holy Spirit, and take their eyes off from all men, and surrender absolutely to the Holy Spirit's control, and give themselves to much prayer for His outpouring, and present themselves as His agents, having stored the Word of God in their heads and hearts, and then look to the Holy Spirit to give it power as it falls from their lips, a mighty revival in the power of the Holy Ghost is inevitable." (R. A. Torrey, "Introduction to Fourth Edition," in *How to Promote & Conduct a Successful Revival with Suggestive Outlines*, ed. R. A. Torrey (New York; London; Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), 3–4.). I pray this for First Fruits Ministries and the whole Christian community around us, starting right here and right now, in Yeshua's name. Amein. Shabbat shalom.