



Pray Like Jesus

Part 3 – Give us

Shay Robbins

I am pumped up. Last night, Ashley and I watched *War Room* and we cried a lot. My blood is pumping. Man, I cannot tell you how excited I am to preach this message. Late Friday night, after midnight, I could not sleep. It was partially because the kids kept waking up and partially because God was stirring in my heart and the message changed. I'm excited for what God has for us today.

As you know, we've been diving into a series on prayer, *Pray Like Jesus*. This Sunday, we are starting *Part 3 – Give Us*, as we are walking through the Lord's Prayer.

Twenty fifteen was a big year for the Robbins. We had a lot of fun things happen, a lot of challenges we ran into, and we grew a lot as a married couple. Ashley and I are more in love with each other than ever before, having to walk through 2015. We found out that we are pregnant with number five. I cannot figure out how this keeps happening. We might have to do something drastic about it. But we are excited. We are going to have our first summer baby. Sometime around the end of July, we will be welcoming baby number five. We are excited about that. I wanted to kick off the message with one of the greatest surprises of 2015.

As many of you guys know, I love hunting. It fills my cup, I love it, I think about it, I worship the Lord and talk to him while I'm doing it. I just love the outdoors and I love hunting. One of the things a hunter looks forward to, as his family is growing up, is bringing the kids under daddy's wing and teaching them how to navigate the woods. I'm eager for that day.

Over Christmas break, we had two weeks off which were much needed. I decided one day that I was going to take Knox out. He's like a three-year-old Tasmanian devil. This is impossible, but I just really wanted to take him out. Ashley kind of laughed in my face. I asked Knox, "Knox, you want to go hunting with Dad today?" and he was like "Yeah!"

I just decided I was going to take him up in the tree stand and see what happens. As we moved towards our little adventure, Knox starts to get a little anxious and he kind of wimps out. As soon as the other kids hear that Knox isn't going, my oldest, Lulu, who is now six years old and in kindergarten, pipes up and gets all excited to go. Lulu is probably the last of all our kids to go on a hunting trip. Just by nature, she is very cautious, very quiet, and very tender. She really insisted she wanted to go, so I explained to her what it was going to look like. I told her we were going to walk out in the woods and it was going to be cold. We were going to have to climb up into a tree and she was going to have to sit there and be quiet for two hours. She still wanted to go so I said alright.

It was bow season so I got Lulu all ready. We don't have kid-sized camo yet, but I put one of my shirts on her and we put a belt around her waist, so she has like a camo dress that she was just thrilled about. We go sneaking out in to the woods and it was so fun. We climbed up in the tree. Just to even get her in the tree, I had her climb up on my back, wrap her legs and arms around me, and then I took a rope and tied her to my body. We went climbing 20 feet up in a tree. I really thought she would bail when she looked up at this tree. This particular tree sits on a slope, so it's 20 feet in the air and then as you look down, it feels very high up in the air. But she was game. We crawled up in that tree and we took some video footage as if we were on the outdoor channel.

If you don't think this daddy's heart isn't ready to explode, you have to be crazy. We're up in the stand and Lulu and I sat there for about 90 minutes and we didn't see a thing. When you take a kid on the first hunting trip, it's crucial that you have some action because this will determine their outlook on hunting for the rest of their life.

The sun started to come down and it's getting late and about last light. I tied up my bow and began lowering it down to the ground. As soon as it touched the ground, low and behold, we had three deer come running in.

I whispered "Lulu, here they come" and I start scrambling to get my bow back up in my hands. So we got one. It was an amazing shot actually. It was amazing; I'll tell you about it later. Anyway, we shot one. We have some friends coming over so we decided we would find it in the morning. We went home, slept that night, and then we woke up and the whole Robbins family, all six of us, Tess the toddler included, go out to the woods to try to find that deer. Lulu managed to find it. I just start cleaning the deer right there. I completely cleaned it, head to toe. Lulu held the bag as I was dropping meat in it and she insisted that she carry the bag of meat out of the woods. It was amazing.

Of course Belle, her little sister, they are Irish Twins... They are 51 weeks apart. Now Belles has to go hunting. So two weeks later, would you believe we go out and this time Belle and I see about 15 deer? It was action packed and really fun. We got a deer as well. Same thing, same story, perfect shot. So we went two for two. It was just amazing. Now our kids are like on fire for hunting. The Lord is so gracious; couldn't have started out any better.

Here's what you need to understand. I've been stewing over this; I guess it's close to two months now. We're talking about a five and a six year old. I have buddies who have spent thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours and they went zero for this year during a four-month hunting season. But that five and six year old... Normally when we pick them up from school and ask them how their day at school was, we get "Good." We'll say, "Tell me a little bit about it" and they look out the window and it's *Oh, look, a squirrel.*

To even have a conversation that's more than a paragraph long is almost impossible because they are like ding dong bonkers nuts. Yet, this five and six year old, when we put them in the situation, they performed to perfection. When we walked into the woods, climbed on my back, and we started climbing up that tree, all the sudden, they had a fear and a respect for their father that they don't normally have throughout the day.

We have great kids, but things were put into perspective in that moment. When we got up in that tree and I sat them down in the seat and I harnessed them into the tree, those little girls, Belle and Lulu, did exactly what Daddy instructed them to do. I told them “When deer come in, if you can see their eyes, they can see you. If you can see their eyes, you can’t move. All you can do is move your eyeballs. You can’t say a word.” Throughout the entire hunt, they hunted to perfection. As I walked away from that, what I’ve been mulling over is those little girls listened to their father in a way that they normally didn’t. As a result, they got to taste this sweet victory of abiding in their father’s instruction. It is so sweet.

I just think of myself, going throughout my life, I am so distracted from what God is telling me. My respect and my reverence and my awe is not where it should be. As a result, I fumble around and I mess things up. If I could only be like those little girls in relation to my heavenly Father in that moment. Can you imagine? That’s what we are talking about today. We’re talking about an intimacy, a personal relationship, a prayer life, a conversation with God that happens with you in the most intimate of levels. That’s what today is about.

I love preaching messages that Satan doesn’t want preached and this is one of them. Hear me on that. He’s going to do everything he can this morning to distract you because he doesn’t want you to hear this message. He doesn’t want the power of God’s word to infiltrate your heart and transform your life. My friends, if we hang on to these words, the words that we are about to process through, each one of us will become freakish weapons in a spiritual war. Do you hear me? These are not Shay’s words. We are going to read God’s words.

In Matthew 6: 9 – 11, we’re looking at the Lord’s Prayer. Ted started with these two messages ago.

9 “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...” When Jesus gives us the model, the first step in that model is to put God in his rightful place. “God, you’re on the throne and I am not. You are huge and I am small. You are all-powerful and I am all-dependent.” The first thing that we do when we go to God in prayer is we put him in the proper place.

The second thing we do is invite his kingdom, his plan, his will, to roll out and take priority in our lives. **10 ‘...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’** One of the things that we need to understand... And this is really what we are looking at as we enter in to that prayer closet. The first thing and our main priority, as we begin to approach the throne of grace and to ask him for our daily provision, is that we put God on his throne and then we seek his will above our own.

I read this amazing book about a man named George Muller. George Muller grew up in England in the 1800s. George Muller was a godly man. As a young man, he set out to start an orphanage. Before he even got started, he just sat down and he was very faithful to journal. In his journal, he wrote out the reasons that he was going to start this ministry. Of course, there was great need with all the orphans in the streets and his heart of compassion was for them and a desire to provide and to minister to the people. But his number one reason was this. His life and this ministry would be a testimony to believers and unbelievers alike that God is still faithful and God still hears.

Here's how he set out to do it. He made a conscience decision at the beginning of his ministry that he was not going to ask or make his needs known to any man. He was only going to take those needs to his heavenly Father. For over 60 years, this man, George Muller, ministered to over 10,000 orphans. He had over eight million dollars run through his hands in support of these orphans and yet he was a poor man.

They would sit down to meals over and over and over again with orphans sitting around the table and not know what they were going to feed them for dinner. They would put their hands together and they would pray and, inevitably, there would be a rap at the door and someone would drop off some bread. This man, over the course of these six plus decades, journaled all of this down. Over the course of his lifetime and throughout his journals, there are over 50,000 recorded answered prayers. George Muller would tell you that 30,000 of those were answered either within the hour or within the day. It's most recorded miracles in human history. This is a man that, in great poverty, sought God on a daily basis. It was like "God, we literally need bread."

This is what he said and this is really important. A lot of times, we try to understand what God's will is. Generally, we make the mistake of "What's God's will for my life?" It kind of puts this selfish spin on it. We need to put that away and understand "God, whatever you will is, that's what I want to be a part of." That's the best life to live.

How do we ascertain the will of God?

First John 5: 14 helps us understand, biblically, how we go to him in prayer and what we should expect. ***This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*** Many times, Jesus himself said, "If you pray in faith, anything you ask will be given to you." What we can do is we can make mistakes of picking up pieces of scripture or quotes throughout the Bible and claim them without any context. If you want to understand prayer in its entirety and our relationship with him in our prayer life, we have to take the entirety of the scriptures.

Attached to what Jesus says, the proper context is it has to be according to his will. God is not a genie in a bottle. Imagine if he gave you everything you wanted. Think about that. What a sloppy mess you'd be. If I gave Knox everything he wanted as a three year old... Think about that. His teeth would be rotting, he would have never had a haircut, and he would have been wearing his Buzz Lightyear pajamas for a year straight. When you look at your prayer life and you're like "God, why don't I get this and why don't I get that," you probably should say to yourself "Well I'm thankful I didn't get that because odds are, God knows best."

When George Muller was talking about going into his prayer closet and understanding what the will of God is, this is what he said. It's a profound quote.

I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own concerning a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

Here's the deal. When we seek God in prayer, prayer doesn't change God. It changes us. That's that first step when you enter into your prayer closet. It could be a physical place and it can be just driving to work or walking throughout the day. But when you enter in, the first thing that has to happen is just this release of control and seeking God's will for whatever the situation might be, whatever your needs are for the day.

Those who seek God for their daily bread become a threat to Satan and his evil intentions.

I want you to look at these two statements:

The weapon of prayer is unused through bad theology.

Last year, I had kind of break through moment in my personal prayer life. What I found was that as I was praying, I just felt like my prayers were weak and without any power, as if as soon as they came out of my mouth, they were just a vapor in the wind and they were just gone. I found myself saying things over and over again because of this feeling of weakness. What I've found is that it's just simply bad theology. A lot of us, myself included, kind of push back against the idea of being a theologian and the reality is if you think about God, you are a theologian – you're processing through the things of God. When we have bad theology, we live out of that, we pray out of that, and we act out of that.

The weapon of prayer is unleashed through good theology.

I want to take you on a little trip here to talk about the power of God, what God's word says about the power of prayer. That, out of good theology, it would transform the way that we seek him through our prayer lives.

In Revelation 8... it really starts in Chapter 4. John is given this vision. He is called in the spirit to a heavenly place and he sees this amazing sight. The sight he sees is this. He sees a throne and on the throne, sits God Almighty. Around the throne, there are 24 elders sitting on their thrones before him. Before each one of the elders are these bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. The bowls are sitting before each one of the elders and as we read through, we find out that God has a book at his right hand.

John begins weeping because no one is worthy to open up the book. All of the sudden, the lamb that was slain, Jesus Christ the Messiah come to the right hand of God. He's the only one that has the ability to open this book. He opens this book and it unleashes seven seals, the seven seals that initiate the end times. The first one was a cold war, a political war. The next was open war. The one following that was a famine. The fourth seal was death. The fifth seal was martyrdom. The sixth seal was physical disturbances. The stars are falling out of the sky, there are earthquakes, and people are scared. Then finally, the seventh seal opens up and he says for about a half hour it became silent in heaven as if to say, "Get ready for this."

Here's where the passage picks up in Revelation 8. ***1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 3 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in***

front of the throne. So picture this. Before the throne of God, there is an altar and the angel brings the prayers of the saints, the incense of the saints. Watch what happens.

4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand. This picture of incense is used with purpose. Incense provides a fragrant aroma. Church, here is what I want you to understand. The prayers of the saints, the people of God, your prayers are a fragrant aroma to your God. Do you hear that?

For those of you that are parents, you get this. When Tess crawls up into my lap... She's two years old and she so soft and she's so cuddly and she doesn't make any sense. It doesn't matter because her voice is so precious to me. I gobble it up; I can't have enough. And so it is with your prayers. And they don't have to sound biblical or theological or smart or fancy. You don't have to have it altogether. You just come as you are and those prayers are incense, a fragrant aroma and God cherishes them. The God of the universe cherishes your words, your conversation with him. Every need, every sorrow, every brokenness, even when you're angry... he cherishes them because he's a heavenly father, he's a good, good father.

5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. My friends, in the end times, God chooses to take the historical sum of the prayers of the saints and drop prayer bombs on the earth in judgment. Not one of your prayers goes unnoticed. God cherishes every single one of them.

I want to read this so I don't miss anything. *The prayer of the saints lay down godly infrastructure across space and time throughout the spiritual realm. Prayer does not pass away. Prayer does not deteriorate. Prayer remains because it was established by the everlasting God. In his sovereignty, he has chosen to weave the prayers of mankind into the fabric of his plan. Prayer matters because God made it that way.*

Your prayers matter to God. We see the power of God play out in this man, Elijah. James 5: 16 -18 is a passage that changed my life. It says **16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.** It is powerful and James give us the example. He tells us about Elijah. He was a man with a nature like ours.

17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

You might think to yourself *Yeah, that was Elijah. He's one of the two men in biblical times who never tasted death.* But James goes out of his way to say he was a man with a nature just like your own. He's just like you. George Muller... he's just like you. Paul... of all the saints you would think *What does he need to offer prayer to God.* But over and over again in his letters, he is asking the churches to pray for him. He says, "Pray for my boldness." Paul, you need boldness? Are you kidding me? Yes, Paul is begging them to pray for him. He needs God's help.

This is what it says in Colossians 4. ***2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.***

This is Paul. He's sitting in prison and he's asking the Colossians to pray that God would open a door. Do you know what God did? In Philippians 2, he said, "It has become clear throughout the entire Praetorian guard that I am in chains for Christ." The Praetorians were 6,000 to 9,000 strong, the elite warrior force of Rome. They had become so political and powerful and influential that when a Cesar they did like would rise up, they would just assassinate him and bring on the next one. Yet they brought the Praetorians, these influential leaders in all of Rome, and they chained them to Paul one after another.

Those suckers were captives. They had no choice but to listen to the gospel and Paul says "It has become clear throughout the entire Praetorian guard (6,000 to 9,000 leaders throughout the Roman Empire) that I am in chains for Christ." God answered that prayer in a mighty way. Paul wrote 14 letters; three times more than Moses. Clearly, from Acts, we know he went on three missionary journeys. Many scholars would say at least five missionary journeys. Acts records he went to 50 different cities and had 30 plus years of ministry until he come to his martyrdom. Acts records all of this in his letters and Paul makes very little mention of it himself. This is the Paul who was begging for prayer. He needed it. Paul needed the power of prayer to accomplish these mighty feats.

Let me remind you of this. Paul was just another man with a nature like your own. One who formerly uttered murderous threats against the followers of Christ. He held the coats of those who stoned the Christians to death and gave hearty approval.

Satan wants you to think that God doesn't care about your needs. You might say, "Yeah, prayer is powerful, but how could God even care about me?" I want to bring you to Psalm 139 and we are going to run through some bullet points. I would urge you, if you have doubts about how loved you are and about how much God cares about you and about intimately he knows you, for the next 30 days, read Psalm 139 every single day and watch what it does in your life. I run back there all the time.

It says God has searched us and has known us. He hasn't just seen us. He has searched us. He knows us intimately. He knows when we sit down and when we rise up. It's not like he's looking at Google Earth that's three months behind. He knows exactly what's about to happen. He understand our thoughts from afar. God is intimately acquainted with all of our ways. Even before the word is on our tongue, he knows it all. That's not just some of us. That's every single one of us. He knows the words before they come out of your mouth.

Where can we go from his Spirit? You can't escape him. Where can we run from his presence? You can't outrun him. God formed our inner parts; he wove us together in our mother's womb. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Our frame was not hidden from him when we were made in secret, skillfully woven in the depths of the earth. It's the word-picture of being in the womb. Here's how intimately God knows you. Every stroke of DNA and every cell of your body was put in place by him. He doesn't just know your personality; he knows your cellular structure. He knows your cellular structure to the point that we don't even know from science. We don't have that kind of depth.

His eyes have seen our unformed substance and in his books, all our days are written and ordained for us. How precious are his thoughts toward us? Do y'all hear me? How precious are his thoughts about you? He thinks you're awesome. He created you. He loves you. You're his little boy. You're his little girl. You can't escape it. How vast is the sum of those thoughts. If we were to count his thoughts toward us, they would outnumber the sand.

God is all-knowing. He knows everything, so don't think for a second that when you utter a prayer, he isn't recognizing that and acting upon it. He knows it all. He cares.

God is omnipresent. He is everywhere. You cannot get far away enough from God. He's everywhere.

God is omnipotent. He is all-powerful. I think sometimes we short God on his ability to act. Are you kidding me? You know how big the earth is in comparison to the universe. He is all-powerful.

God is omnicrazyaboutus. You can hashtag that if you want. He's not just putting up with you. He's not just bearing with you. You're not a pain in his neck. He's crazy about you. He cares so deeply about your needs and your troubles and your pain and your addictions and your burdens and your joys and your triumphs and your victories. He's crazy about you.

Matthew 7: 7 -11 talks about this idea of our daily bread. **7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.**

9 "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Here's what's been happening for me personally. I've found that as I seek him... If I take the time to get up and thoroughly pour myself out to him daily and really process through everything that's going on – every burden, every anxiety, every big question mark, every need and every desire – as I pour those things and the more thorough I am, the more I see him answering prayers throughout the day. Here's what will happen. If you seek him, you are going to find him. If you knock, he's going to open the door. What's going to happen is your faith is going to be bolstered.

We all know the song that goes *Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so*. I heard Francis Chan say this and I so wholeheartedly agree. He kind of changes the words. He says *Jesus loves me, this I know, for my prayer life shows me so*.

You've probably met people, older men and women in our church, who walk around with just like this crown of godliness upon them. They walk around in this regal, holy, and humble nature because they've seen God answer prayers time and time again. The more I seek him, the more I become aware of how powerful and awesome he is and how much he cares for me. Even when I don't pray, he is providing. I'm just ignorant of what he's doing.

Over the last couple of months, there have been a couple of prayers answered for Ashley and I that have been astounding. They are so clearly God. There is no explanation. I think to myself *I just spoke to the God of the universe and he answered me*. The God of the universe answered my prayer. I'm ready to lose my mind because God is real.

I want to put a challenge on the church today. This challenge is attached to Matthew 6: 6. Ted spoke on this a couple of weeks ago. The scripture says, **5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**

There is a promise that is attached to your prayer life. Don't get it twisted. We're not talking about a prosperity gospel. I'm not going to get rich and famous and get a new car. That's foolishness. But the kind of rewards that are heavenly and have eternal value. We're talking about the breaking of strongholds and addictions, the freedom from anxiety, joy in a place of mourning, healing of the heart, and occasionally even healing of the physical body. There are promises attached to your prayer life.

I want to put it on the church today that you begin to set your alarm clock early and enter into a place of prayer. You might have never had this kind of intentionality in your faith before. You might not even be a believer. I put the challenge on us all that we, as a church body, might begin to seek God in an intentional, personal way. Wherever you are at in your faith, go harder, push in deeper. Let's see what happens. I would be willing to bet that the faith, individually and corporately, will explode. I would take all that I own and I would bet it in Vegas because God's promises never fail. What might happen with this church? There are a lot of amazing things that are happening in and through this church, but what might happen if we all began to press into the power of God through prayer like never before? Did you hear me rattle off Paul's life? He was a man with a nature just like ours.

If we would enter into our prayer closet as if we were a five or six year old girl walking up to her first tree stand... "Daddy, I'm scared."

"Don't worry; I'll give you the courage. I'm going to put you on my back and I'm going to bring you up there."

"But, Daddy, I don't know what to do."

"Here's what you do. Let me tell you."

"But, Daddy, I'm getting nervous."

"Don't worry, sweetie, I'm right here by your side."

That's what God wants from us. He just wants the heart of a child.

We're going to take communion and it is appropriate. Jesus, when he was at the Last Supper, he took the break and he broke it. He said, "This is a symbol of my body being broken for you."

Understand that when we go to the Lord in prayer and we seek our daily bread... do you know what we are seeking? We are seeking Jesus. That's what we need. You need Jesus and the entire awesome package of what he brings to the table. That's what you need.

Then he took the cup and he said, "This cup is a sign of the covenant. It is my blood poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

I would just invite the church to spend a little time in prayer right now and partake of the elements at your leisure and then I'll close up with a couple of things.

Every first Sunday of the month, we take a mercy offering. What I love about the mercy offering is it is the opportunity to answer the prayers of our brothers and sisters in need that are in this building. On your way out, you will see the buckets for the mercy offering.

Another thing I would like to say is that R.P. lost his bride, Debbie Sue, this week. They celebrated her life this weekend. We want to pray with them and for them. In a congregation this large, it's very likely that there are others that are experiencing loss right now. Just as a church body, go to the Lord in prayer on their behalf. We rejoice with those who rejoice and we mourn with those who mourn. That being said, let's go ahead and close in prayer.

Jesus, thank you so much for how much you love us. Thank you, God, for your word; it is amazing. It's just awesome how much you love us. We are just thankful. You could have done this however you wanted. Your character and your love and your compassion and your care are such a blessing. Thank you for us getting to be sons and daughters of the King.

I pray for those who don't have a relationship with you that today they would surrender their hearts, once and for all, and that they would find the warmth and comfort and the peace that you can only find in the arms of Jesus.

We pray for R.P. and for Matt and Katie and their extended family for the loss of their dear wife and mother. I pray a blessing of peace and comfort, God. You are the God of all comfort who comforts us in our afflictions. We just call you down and ask for that. I also want to lift up anybody else who is experiencing loss. I pray that you might answer their prayers with a peace that surpasses all understanding. And even while the pain doesn't go away, the ministry of the Holy Spirit would be a reminder and a proof of how much you love them and how real you are.

I pray, Jesus, that you would start a prayer revolution in this church and whatever comes out of that, we ask that it be your will. May your kingdom come and your will be done. It's in Jesus' name we pray... Amen