

One Prayer to Bind Them All

Seeking the Glory of Christ Transforms Every Other Way You Pray

By David Bryant



The most familiar words from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy go like this:

One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all, and in the darkness bind them.

As the story goes, the One Ring referred to was secretly forged by evil Sauron in the fires of Mount Doom and had the power to dominate 19 other Great Rings. This would allow him to command the minds of those who wore them. In this way, Tolkien introduces us to how Satan works.

But for Jesus followers, here's a radical *revision* of that mythical rhyme:

One PRAYER to rule them all, One PRAYER to find them, One PRAYER to bring them all, *and before God's throne bind them.*

What is this "one prayer"? It is any appeal to heaven that seeks a greater revelation of God's glory in Christ Jesus—for yourself, another person, a situation, a church, a community, a nation, or a whole generation. It's the one prayer that

defines, designs, and discharges final answers to all the rest.

Once Christians understand the reason for and the content of the most consequential prayer of all—the one that rules and binds all the others—and makes that passion their own, everything about their praying will be transformed forever.

Three Questions about the One Prayer

To better understand this one prayer, let me ask you three questions. Pause to reflect on your answers.

What was the *most powerful prayer meeting* you've ever attended?

What was the *most powerful prayer* you've ever prayed or heard prayed?

What was the *most powerful answer* to prayer you've ever received?

Then consider my answers to those three questions:

1. *The most powerful prayer meeting I've ever experienced* took place when 1.5 million men gathered on The Mall in Washington, D.C., in October 1997. They came from coast-to-coast to spend six hours praying for the spiritual reclamation of America—praying for what I personally have been speaking about and fostering for years: what I term a nationwide Christ Awakening movement.

2. *The most powerful prayer I ever prayed* was prayed again that very day but this time with many others. This occurred when I read to the men John's description in Revelation 1 of the magnificence of our ascended Lord Jesus Christ. Then, I called on us all to join in doing what John did in the passage—to fall on our faces, spread flat out on the grass, prostrated before our Savior King.

Next, I invited them to remain totally silent for three whole minutes, focused on God's Son in the majesty of His supremacy—the One who is, in Himself, the ultimate reason for and answer to every other prayer we will ever pray.

Hushed. Listening. Waiting. Watching. Anticipating. Open to the wonders of our risen, reigning King. Those three minutes in silence before Jesus was biblical prayer at its zenith! It's the kind of powerful praying I've experienced time and time again.

3. *The most powerful answer to prayer* I've ever witnessed was manifested that same autumn day across the whole landscape. In the years since, as I've traveled the nation, I've lost count of the times men have come up to me to share what always is essentially the same testimony. It goes something along these lines:

David, the entire six hours that day were a tremendous prayer event for me. But the moment that had the greatest impact was when we were prostrate and silent for three minutes, looking to Jesus alone.

Then they'll proceed to tell me how in that sacred space they encountered the Master in new ways, or how their ministry for Christ was revived, or how the trajectory of their lives has since changed. Some even told me they committed their lives to Christ for the very first time while we were motionless in the dirt.

Three minutes—when none of us did anything! Three minutes—when a revelation of the Son of God by the Spirit of God that flooded the people of God with the glory of God became a miracle of God in thousands of lives.

All Prayers Are Really One Prayer: the

Prayer of Moses

If you had asked Moses, one of Scripture's greatest spiritual leaders, these same three questions I asked you, here's how I think he might have answered, based on Exodus 33–34:

- *The most powerful prayer meeting* for me took place any day I met with Jehovah God “face to face as with a friend” in a structure I called “the tent of meeting.”
- *The most powerful prayer* I ever prayed was my heart-cry to God when my role as a leader started overwhelming me: “Lord, show me Your glory!”
- *The most powerful answer* I ever received came when God responded: “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence” (33:19). That was precisely what I needed: a fresh revelation of God's glory!

Here's why it is important for us to know about Moses' experience in Exodus 33: According to 2 Corinthians 3, that entire narrative in Exodus is meant to point us to Jesus, who takes all of it to the highest level. Referring to this incident and its aftermath, Paul writes:

For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. . . . We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. . . . Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces are beholding the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (vss. 10–18).

Essentially, this passage tells us three things:

- The destiny for every Christian life is for us to see, experience, enter into, and be transformed by the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

- Moses' prayer to see that glory was answered in a temporary, fading way. But for us, because of Christ, it is answered in an unsurpassed, unending way.
- The Holy Spirit liberates every believer to become fully engaged with an ongoing, inexhaustible, revolutionary process of being captivated by the nature, character, riches, and ways of the living God through the person of the risen, living, reigning Son of God.

In other words, though he didn't know it at the time, *Jesus* would become the most powerful answer to Moses' most significant prayer.

In fact, just six verses later in 2 Corinthians 4:6, Paul distills the essence of that answer to one sentence. It defines the ultimate outcome of every prayer that has ever been prayed—including yours:

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of *the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ* (emphasis added).

Such a breakthrough of Christ's glory, like the explosion of creation itself, is God's desire for all of us, all the time. Therefore, "Show me your glory" stands as the one prayer that binds all other prayers because 2 Corinthians 4:6 is the final answer for all other prayers.

God's answer to our every prayer is *Jesus*—that is, deeper revelations and more open manifestations of the glory and reign of Jesus. Whatever the topic, the occasion, the sense of desperation—for oneself or when interceding for nations—every prayer we pray should end up sounding like Moses' prayer.

To say it another way, every prayer should sound like the last prayer of the Bible (Revelation 22:20): "*Come, Lord Jesus.*" We simply need *more of Him*. It's the prayer that binds all the others.

My Changed Prayer Life

For nearly 50 years, I've served the Kingdom by mobilizing prayer, praying people, and prayer initiatives—including the founding of Concerts of Prayer International in 1988. Over that time, I've fostered and served movements of united prayer—national, urban, and international.

So, let me close by suggesting a few implications of the “One Prayer” for my own prayer life:

- The one central **principle** for igniting and sustaining a life of prayer—or a movement of prayer—is to be focused foremost on Christ as the “*hope* of all the glorious things to come” (Col. 1:27). It's more a matter of what we're praying *toward* than what we're praying *about*.
- The primary **agenda** for all prayer is for a greater *revelation* of God's glory in the person of God's Son. Keep that always in the forefront.
- The preeminent **answer** to every prayer, therefore, is the Father giving us *more of Christ Himself*. God has nothing more for us beyond who Jesus is.
- The main **goals** for every prayer time and every prayer gathering are fourfold:
 - To give us a richer *focus* on the glory of Christ.
 - To give us wider *fulfillments* of the purposes of Christ.
 - To give us new depths of the *fullness* of the life of Christ.
 - To give us the way into greater *fervency* for the person of Christ.

Biblically speaking, there are six primary **approaches** to seeking the glory of God “in the face of Christ”:

1. REJOICE: By prayer, worshipping, celebrating, praising, and thanking our reigning Redeemer for all the wonders of His glory that we've already experienced.

2. REPENT: By prayer, confessing and putting away everything in our lives that is *incompatible* with the glory of who God's Messiah is, or what He's doing right now, or how He gets exalted.

3. RESIST: By prayer, standing against every strategy of the powers of darkness against God's Kingdom, and inviting the Light of the World to defeat Satan by spreading more of the glory of God's Son in our lives, churches, nation, and world.

4. REQUEST: By prayer, seeking God's face for increased revelations, manifestations, and mighty displays of the glory of King Jesus on behalf of whatever needs, desires, or concerns we're dealing with.

5. RECEIVE: By prayer, stopping, listening, waiting, watching—becoming literally silent before the Lord of Glory long enough to hear what He wants to say to us or what He wants to do in us or through us, in answer to our prayers.

6. RECOMMIT: By prayer, giving ourselves totally to Jesus as Lord, whatever it costs us, to be part of the answer to all our prayers as we become a channel through which His glory is declared to others.

Finally, there is one substantial **guarantee** that our prayers will be heard and answered. Simply ask yourself, looking back at what you just prayed: Can you envision the Father answering your prayer in such a way that, *above all else*, the answer will:

EXALT Jesus' *name*?

SPREAD Jesus' *fame*?

EXTEND Jesus' *reign*?

INCREASE Jesus' *gain*?

RATIFY Jesus' *claim*?

The Best Part of Silence

Here's why I often say that those 180 seconds of stillness on The Mall—as we were seeking and savoring the Lamb on His throne—may be the holiest moments of my entire life.

You see, just before I went up to read Revelation 1:12–18—about Christ's ascended glory—and then invite the multitude to fall down before Him, I believe the Spirit of God gave me two insights.

These came to me when I stepped into the “intercessor tent” behind the main platform, 20 minutes before I went to the mic on stage. Sixty earnest believers laid on hands and prayed over me. As they prayed, in my heart I heard two things from the Spirit:

I was to set aside my prepared talk and lead the men in the unique approach that I finally took.

In the scene that would soon stretch before me—an ocean of men stretching back to the Washington Monument—I was about to witness, in the Lord's words, “a picture of things to come.”

This extraordinary promise—and what I saw—has driven my prayers and my ministry ever since.

This is why today, through *ChristNow.com*, Proclaim Hope is working with many strategic alliances to facilitate a national campaign for a Christ Awakening throughout our land by 2024.

I believe with all my heart a day is fast approaching when—to paraphrase Habakkuk 2:14—“The church and this nation will be fully alive to and saturated with the knowledge of the GLORY OF CHRIST as the waters cover the sea.”

It's the answer to millions of prayers. It's the one prayer that binds them all.

DAVID BRYANT is president of PROCLAIM HOPE! and Founder of

Concerts of Prayer International. As founder of *Christnow.com*, his heart is to see Christ Awakenings across our nation.

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