

Back to the Altar

100 DAYS OF PRAYER

FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

July 4-12, 2025

Crossing Our Jordan River

by Don MacLafferty



Have you ever felt God calling you to step out of your comfort zone, to move forward by faith on some ministry venture, but it seemed like what God was asking you to do was crazy? (It probably didn't help when others saw what you were doing, and they also thought that you were crazy.)

April and I had our faith put to the test after God called us to leave our paid ministry and start working as full-time volunteers. I was senior pastor of a large congregation and had been employed by the Seventh-day Adventist church for over twenty-five years when God called me to step back from that position so I could be more free to go wherever He called in our growing international discipleship ministry.

As we began this new phase of our ministry, we had told God, "Send us anywhere you want us to go!" His answer surprised us: "Lacombe, Alberta, Canada!"

We sent in all our paperwork to the Canadian government, so that we could move to the place where God was calling. After months of waiting for the proper permits to move, we faced a dilemma. Our daughter Jessica needed to start school in a couple of weeks, but we were told that we would have to wait four or five more months. Yet, God said, "I have urgency for you to move to Canada! Call for revival there before the school year begins."

In prayer, I shared why that was not possible at that time. God challenged us, "Go put your feet in the Jordan! Go to the border by faith!" Our friends kindly advised us that we should not leave our home and travel 1,000 miles north to cross the border into Canada without having a permit in hand. "If you were told it would take four to five more months to get your permit, then that is what it will be." But God said, "Go!"

So, we packed up everything we could into a moving truck and gave the rest away. I drove the truck, and April drove our van behind me. Jessica bounced between us to give us much-appreciated company. We headed north by faith, sure that God would work a miracle before we came to the US/Canada border. We encouraged each other, "Even though the Canadian officials said it would take four to five more months, God can do anything! He will send us our permits in the next few days before we reach the border!"

So, we drove through great forests, dry wastelands, and along roads where we saw no one for long stretches. Each day we eagerly checked our email to see if God had worked a miracle. There was nothing.

Finally, the big day arrived! We drove right up to within a mile of the border and stopped and checked our email with great hope and expectation for a miracle.

Guess what? There was nothing!

"What do we do now, Lord?" we asked in prayer.

"Put your feet in the Jordan. Go cross the border." He spoke to our hearts.

We drove up to the border feeling like fools, parked, and stepped into the crisp, clean office. The official looked over our documentation. "You have no permit from Canada to move here. Where is your permit?" he asked with concern.

"We don't have a permit yet. We were told it would take four to five more months." I bravely answered.

"Follow me!" The border control officer said. We followed him outside to the truck. "How far have you come? I hope you still have a home to return to! It is impossible for me to do anything to help you move into Canada without your permit."

He shook his head and walked away. That was all!

We looked blankly at each other. It wasn't supposed to work like this. We were supposed to put our feet in the Jordan, and God was supposed to part the waters. I silently prayed, God, help! Help us get across this border. We are here by faith in Your command!

The officer immediately spun around and walked back to us, as if he had heard my silent prayer to heaven. "What were you hoping I would do today for your family?" he asked incredulously.

"I don't know if you believe in God or not, but God has called our family to move to Canada to help families mentor their children to be disciples of Jesus."

He stared at us, his face impassive. "Follow me!" he ordered.

For one hour, this officer, who said it was impossible to get us across the border, worked to find a solution. Two hours went by, and he asked one more officer and then another to help him. Three border officers worked tirelessly to find a way we could enter Canada—after stating it was completely impossible in our situation.

After five hours, the officer called from the desk, "MacLafferty family!" We came up to the desk. Thump, thump, thump, we heard as he quickly stamped each of our passports.

"Welcome to Canada!"

We were overjoyed! "Sir, I don't know if you believe in God, but do you mind if I thank God right here for how He used you to be part of His miracle?" I asked with a

great smile. He looked warily to the left and then to the right, lowered his voice, and said, "Follow me!"

He led us out to our truck and turned to us. I looked him in the eye and said, "God just did a mighty miracle through you today!" I could not read his expression. Haltingly, he shared, "What you don't know is that I used to believe in God! I have become discouraged lately with God and church and gave up on both. Today I choose to believe in God again. I will go home after my shift and tell my wife what God did today that I know was impossible. We will believe in God again and make our home a place to worship Him."

In awe of this living God, we all bowed our heads for prayer. We waved goodbye to the officer and drove into Canada with less than a hundred dollars to spend. We had no home and no job, but God was calling, and we trusted in His care.

Trust God as you follow His call.

Don MacLafferty is president of In Discipleship, an intergenerational revival ministry impacting the lives of both young and old. He has authored more than 10 books, including the original "The Way Back to the Altar" discipleship curriculum which is being used during this 100 Days of Prayer. This testimony comes from his book of faith stories titled "Live Like Elijah." You can read the whole book [at this link](#). Pastor Don currently assists the General Conference Ministerial Association as a volunteer and leads out with Back to the Altar training programs all around the world. He will be leading Back to the Altar prayer and revival sessions in the prayer room at the General Conference session in St. Louis this week.

Moving Forward by Faith

Welcome to the last session of **Back to the Altar | 100 Days of Prayer!**

It's time for one final Back to the Altar review. How many of the Back to the Altar principles can you name by memory? Which principle has had the biggest impact in your personal life? (Write down your answers or share with a friend.)

Let's do a quick review all together:

Principle 1: Come to Jesus as You Are

Principle 2: Honor Jesus as Lord

Principle 3: Discover a Fresh Picture of Jesus in the Word and in Prayer

Principle 4: Ask for and Receive a Fresh Daily Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Principle 5: Love Your Family Sacrificially

Principle 6: Disciple Others to Jesus

Principle 7: Live Your God-given Mission

These basic discipleship principles we've been sharing throughout all these sessions, including the appeals to put away our distractions and hide God's Word in our hearts, are probably not new instruction for you. Chances are, you've heard all this information before. The problem, however, for many is that they do not live the basic principles of discipleship that they know. They have an intellectual knowledge but not a heart and life transformation. But God wants to change this pattern. He wants us to experience daily revival and reformation from the inside out.

Going forward from today, what will you do to keep these Back to the Altar principles a part of your daily life? What are you going to do to share these principles with others?

For the final study in this series, let's learn a little more how we can move forward by faith, even when the road before us seems impossible!

Supplemental
Material to Take
This Series Deeper

**Taking Up Elijah's
Mantle**

[https://tinyurl.com/
BTTAW14VID1](https://tinyurl.com/BTTAW14VID1)

**After BTTA: What
Next?**

[https://tinyurl.com/
BTTAW14VID2](https://tinyurl.com/BTTAW14VID2)

**Don MacLafferty
Testimony**

[https://tinyurl.com/
BTTAW14VID3](https://tinyurl.com/BTTAW14VID3)

Moving Forward by Faith - Study

1. Connect Activity

What is something in your life that you thought was impossible that actually happened? (Write down your response or share it with a friend.)

2. The God of the Impossible

Read/Reflect on Matthew 19:26, Luke 18:27, Luke 1:37 - What do we learn about God from these passages?

Read the following passages and discover what God did in these impossible situations!

- Genesis 18:13-14
- Numbers 11:18-23
- 2 Kings 6:15-17
- Luke 1:31-38
- Hebrews 11:17-19
- 2 Chronicles 20:1-2, 12-22

Read/Reflect on Hebrews 13:8 – What does this passage teach us about God?

If you have five friends nearby, gather them together in a circle, and without measuring or making calculations, take a guess together on how many feet/meters you think you all can stretch as a team. The only rule is that you have to touch. Once you've decided on a number, experiment and see if your guess was close. Ask someone to measure for you!

Pause right now to do this activity before continuing!

Read/Reflect on Ephesians 3:20-21 and Jeremiah 33:3 - What do these passages tell us that God is longing to do?

Chances are, when you did the stretching exercise with friends, you found that you could go far beyond what you expected. The same is true in the Christian walk!

It's time to move forward by faith asking and expecting great things from God. Times aren't going to get easier. Jesus is about to come! But that's when we need to hold on by faith and press forward even more boldly.

"Just believe and praise God and go forward. We are almost home ... Bear your whole weight on the promises of God. Believe. It is your privilege to believe" (*Letter 31*, Jan 1, 1897).

In *The Great Controversy*, we read, "The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger,—a faith that will not faint, though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time... Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 621).

3. Be the Last Elijah in these Final Days before Jesus Returns

Throughout this series, interspersed with the Back to the Altar principles of discipleship, we have been catching little glimpses of what it means to be the "Last Elijah" living in the final days of earth's history. This hasn't been just the re-telling of a story of a mighty prophet who lived long ago. Elijah's story is meant to become our story. *God is calling us, His last day remnant people, to become The Last Elijah*, to help the world prepare for Christ's soon return!

Have you been convicted? What have you learned from the life of Elijah, over these 100 Days of Prayer, that has spoken most deeply to your heart? How are you choosing to live differently as a result? (*Journal your response or share with a friend!*)

As we learned, Elijah stood boldly before King Ahab, because he was already standing and living boldly for God. He did not question what might happen when God told him to do stand before King Ahab. When the Word of the Lord came to Elijah, he did not hesitate or ask questions. He immediately obeyed. Even when much of Israel, including king Ahab, was worshiping the idol Baal, Elijah still stood boldly for God and called for heaven-sent fire. God heard Elijah's prayer, just as He hears our prayers today.

Ellen White writes, "It was because Elijah was a man of large faith that God could use him in this grave crisis in the history of Israel. As he prayed, his faith reached out and grasped the promises of Heaven, and he persevered in prayer until his petitions were answered. He did not wait for the full evidence that God had heard him but was willing to venture all on the slightest token of divine favor. And yet what he was enabled to do under God, all may do in their sphere of activity in God's service... Faith such as this is needed in the world today—faith that will lay hold on the promises of God's word and refuse to let go until Heaven hears" (*Prayer*, p. 138).

Elijah was not perfect. But, even when Elijah did fall into discouragement and run for his life in fear of Jezebel, God was *still* with him. God did not give up on Elijah, and He hasn't given up on you either. Even though you've probably made some bad choices in your life, God is still with you, and He has a distinct mission and purpose for your life.

Let's tune in one last time to this special story and see what happened to Elijah and how Elisha reacted when facing his own Jordan River.

- **Play Video 1:** Taking Up Elijah's Mantle - <https://tinyurl.com/BTTAW14VID1>

Will you take the challenge? Will you mentor an Elisha for the kingdom?

What would happen if you really lived like Elijah and Elisha, today? If you continued to cross whatever "Jordan River" you face, by faith in the Living God?

Consider the following lessons we've learned over this Last Elijah series as you ask yourself "What if...?"

- What if you met with God each morning before you met with others?
- What if you lived each day by the Word of God?
- What if you listened every day for that still small voice?
- What if you cried out each morning for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit?
- What if you repaired the broken down altars in your own home and heart?
- What if you by faith heard the promised rain before it came?
- What if you ran the race of your life by the power of God, and not your own strength?
- What if you dared to call family, friends, co-workers, and even strangers to follow God?
- What if you stood against the obstacles facing your life by the authority of God?
- What if you trusted that what God has called you to do, He will provide for you to do?

Bow your head right now and pray the following prayer:

O Lord, Mighty God of Elijah and of me, I praise You for being the Living One, who was, and is and is to come! Forgive me for living without fearless faith. Forgive me for my compromises. Restore the broken altars of my heart, home, and community. Lead me by Your Holy Spirit to live each remaining moment of my life with holy boldness and fearless

faithfulness. Give me the selfless love to mentor an Elisha by Your power to serve You far beyond what I have given You. In Jesus' name, amen!

4. Three Practical Challenges

- **1st Challenge:** Invest two-six hours within the next week to have a personal retreat with God. Ask two to three close friends to be praying for you during this time.
- **2nd Challenge:** While on the retreat, humbly claim Ephesians 3:20,21. Ask God what He is ready to do in your life FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY BEYOND ALL you can ask or think? Write down all God impresses you to do.
- **3rd Challenge:** Go share this list with your close friends and ask them to pray for you!

If your life has been impacted by Back to the Altar, please share your testimony at the following link: <https://www.backtothealtar.org/share-your-testimony/>

Let's pray!

Bonus Material

What's next after Back to the Altar? Consider leading your family or friends or others through this series. To hear some ideas or learn about resources we have, listen to this video as Pastor Don and Melody discuss different available resources and where to go from here.

- **Play Video 2:** After Back to the Altar - What Next? - <https://tinyurl.com/BTTAW14VID2>
- **Play Video 3:** Pastor Don MacLafferty Testimony – “I Gave Up My Job to Become a Full Time Volunteer” - <https://tinyurl.com/BTTAW14VID3>

If you or your church would like to continue to study together, here's some additional small group studies that foster revival and a deeper Back to the Altar experience with Jesus.

- The Last Elijah: Revival Manual - <https://tinyurl.com/TheLastElijah>
- Jesus Last Love Letter - <https://tinyurl.com/JesusLastLoveLetter>
- The Timeless Truth of Jesus - <https://tinyurl.com/TimelessTruthOfJesus>
- Meet Jesus Outside: Bible Prayer Walks for Adults, Children and Youth - <https://tinyurl.com/MeetJesusOutside>

Stay tuned for more resources coming to www.backtothealtar.org.

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Move Forward by Faith & Live at the Altar!

“Lay all upon the altar, a living, consuming sacrifice. Bind it with cords, if you cannot keep it there. Give yourselves to prayer. **Live at the altar.** Strengthen your purposes by the promises of God.” *Testimonies for the Church*, no. 4, p. 20

“**There is no limit** to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.” *Christian Service*, p. 254

“**Press together, press together.** In union there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat.” *7 Letters and Manuscripts*, Lt 32a, 1892, par. 18

“We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy that we most need to fear...No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self. We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. **We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls.**”
Ministry of Healing, p. 485

“It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask.” *The Great Controversy*, p. 525

Prayer Focus

For July 4 - 12, 2025



Powerful Quotes on Faith and Prayer

“According to your FAITH be it unto you!” Matt. 9:29

“Here are the great cities... [around the world] with their millions of inhabitants that have not yet heard the last warning message. How are these to be warned? If the people of God would only exercise faith, He would work in a wonderful manner to accomplish this work. Hear the words of Christ: ‘If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.’ Precious promise! Do we believe it? What marvelous results would appear if the united prayers of this company were to ascend to God in living faith! Jesus stands ready to take these petitions and present them to His Father, saying, ‘I know these persons by name. Send answers to their prayers; for I have graven their names on the palms of My hands.’” *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 152 (1886).

Prayer Focus for Week 14

1. **Pray that** the Holy Spirit would be poured out in such rich measure at the General Conference Session that it would be evident to all that God is with us as a church, and He is doing a great work. (Claim Luke 11:13)
2. **Pray that** it won't be business as usual at this GC session, but a time of spiritual revival that will refresh the hearts of all in attendance. (Claim Psalms 85:6)
3. **Pray for** the General Conference Steering Committee made up of leaders who will be deciding how each day's agenda falls into place during Session. (Claim Ps. 32:8)
4. **Pray that** God will lead as votes take place and new leadership decisions are made that will impact future generations. (Claim James 1:5)
5. **Pray for** the Women's meetings, the Back to the Altar revival sessions in the prayer room, and the business session discussion and agenda. Pray that everything will fall into place for the glory and honor of God. (Claim Romans 16:27)
6. **Pray for** the youth and young adults that will attend the GC meetings, that they will see Jesus displayed in the lives of our leaders and long to follow and know Jesus more. (Claim Ps. 115:1)
7. **Pray that** the theme “Jesus is Coming, I WILL GO” would take on a new significance for all Seventh-day Adventist during this General Conference Session, and that we would be compelled to step out in faith and spread the gospel far and wide while we still have the ability to share. (Claim Isa. 6:8)
8. **Pray that** we as a church will embrace the mission God has for us, and move forward by faith, no matter what we face in the future. Pray that we would stand boldly for the truth of God's Word and be ready for Jesus' soon coming! (Claim 2 Chron. 16:9)