Spurgeon, Charles
The Practice of Powerful and Effective Prayer

6. Comfort for Those Whose Prayers Are Feeble

Spurgeon comforts believers who feel they cannot pray well, taking his cue from Lamentations 3:56, 'Hide not thine ear at my breathing.' He argues that even the faintest prayer — a mere breath — is heard by God. The point is to reassure weak, discouraged, or struggling Christians that the power of prayer lies in sincerity, not eloquence.

Key takeaways

- When you cannot pray as you would, pray as you can. Weakness of body, mind, or spirit is never a reason to stop praying — it is a reason to pray more.
- Don't wait until you 'feel fit' to pray. That is like refusing medicine because you are ill. Pray yourself into a praying frame; God helps you in doing your duty, not in neglecting it.
- The best Christians usually find the most fault with their own prayers — they feel far more than they can express, so their prayers never satisfy their own high standard.

- The power of prayer is not measured by how well it is expressed. God weighs prayer by the heart's sincerity, not by fluent words or good grammar. A groan or a tear can hold more prayer than a polished liturgy.
- Feeble prayers are still heard in heaven for three reasons: the Holy Spirit writes them on the heart, the Father's ear is quick to catch His child's faintest breathing, and Christ perfects and presents our imperfect prayers, sealed with His blood.
- Since even a breath of desire toward God is heard, no one can truly say 'I cannot pray' — only 'I will not.' Those who stay prayerless with mercy freely offered have no excuse.

Passages worth keeping

> *"When you cannot pray as you would, take care to pray as you can."*

The chapter's central pastoral instruction.

> *"Pray for prayer: pray yourself, by the Spirit's assistance, into a praying frame."*

Answers the excuse of not feeling ready to pray.

How it connects

The chapter turns weakness into an argument for grace: because Christ intercedes and the Spirit prompts, the value of prayer rests on Him, not on our performance — the same gospel logic as justification by faith.

Scripture referenced

- **Lamentations 3:56** -- The text — 'Hide not thine ear at my breathing'; prayer as a mere breath.
- **Isaiah 40:1** -- 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people' — the Master's command driving the sermon.
- **Romans 8:26** -- 'Groanings which cannot be uttered' — the Spirit aids weak prayer.
- **Proverbs 16:1** -- Preparation of the heart is from the Lord, not self-worked.
- **Luke 18:9-14** -- The Publican's sigh accepted over the Pharisee's eloquent boast.
- **Hebrews 12:24** -- Christ's blood 'speaketh better things than that of Abel' — it makes feeble prayers prevail.