

Bill Johnson Releases Statement on Bethel Couple's Public Prayers for Dead Daughter's Resurrection

Bill Johnson posted a video statement on Thursday regarding recent prayer requests for the resurrection of a Bethel worship leader's daughter. Kalley Heiligenthal, a worship leader and songwriter for Bethel, requested urgent prayer on social media after doctors pronounced her 2-year-old daughter, Olive, dead on Saturday.

"We are asking for bold, unified prayers from the global church to stand with us in belief that He will raise this little girl back to life," Heiligenthal wrote on Instagram. "Her time here is not done, and it is our time to believe boldly, and with confidence wield what King Jesus paid for. It's time for her to come to life."

Heiligenthal's requests have been met with support by many leaders, including Rich Wilkerson Jr., Darlene Zschech and Kris Vallotton. But others have criticized the unusual prayer request.

Johnson addressed both supporters and critics alike in his video update today. This is what he said:

Hi, I'm Bill Johnson from Bethel Church here in Redding, California. First of all, I wanted to say thank you to the countless numbers of people around the world who have been praying with us for the miracle we need this week. Saturday, just a few days ago, we had a great tragedy. One of the key individuals in our world, their two year old little girl died quite unexpectedly, just out of nowhere. So we've been praying for the miracle of God. Mom and Dad, Andrew and

Kalley, have asked us to pray for resurrection. We've joined with them.

We have a biblical precedent. Jesus raised the dead. Jesus raised the dead. Not only that, He introduced Himself as the resurrection and the life. In fact, in John 11:40, He says, 'If you believe, you will see the glory of God.' So seeing what Jesus has accomplished, what He did in His lifetime, and then when you add to that that He commanded His followers, His disciples, in Matthew 10:8 to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cast off devils, to cleanse lepers. None of those are things we can actually do. He commanded us because somehow in our yes, he gives us the ability to carry out his mission. Being commissioned means we've said yes to his mission. This is our heart. So we've tried to run with a real conviction and devotion to the very thing that Jesus taught us to do. So He modeled it, and He commanded us to do the same.

Some have asked, 'Isn't this interrupting the sovereignty of God?' And my response is, first of all, we don't ever want to violate the sovereignty of God. God is sovereign. He chooses what He wants, and we cooperate with Him. There's no question. But then my question is why did Jesus raise the dead? Did He violate the sovereignty of God? Did we have the Father will one thing and Jesus will another? Of course not. We know that's not true. The reason Jesus raised the dead is because not everyone dies in God's timing. And Jesus could tell. He would interrupt that funeral. He would interrupt that process—that some just call the sovereignty of God—and he would raise the little girl. He'd raise the adult person from the dead.

The point is, Jesus set a precedent for us to follow. We rarely know what we're doing, especially when we come into new areas like this. There's no manual that tells us, 'Fast this many days. Pray this many hours.' We don't have any idea. What we do have is a biblical precedent: Jesus'

lifestyle and Jesus' commands.

Some would ask, 'How long do you pray and when do you quit praying?' And I don't have a good answer. We're kind of in the middle of that journey right now. But there is a biblical precedent to continue praying. Luke 18:1 is a whole story about the importance of persistence in prayer. The end of Hebrews 10 and the beginning of Hebrews 11 talks about enduring faith—the faith that endures past what everybody would expect. It's that need to hold something. So we're in that point.

We admittedly are just trying our best. We want to honor mom and dad. We want to honor their heart for the resurrection of their child. So we've said yes. We've partnered with them. The child has been in the morgue ever since the child died. She's not here. We don't surround the baby and perform some ritual. We're together, honestly, to worship Jesus. He's the miracle worker. We're not. He's the grace giver. We're not. He's the one from whom all perfect gifts flow. And we simply are here to honor the name of Jesus.

We know enough about this process through the years. We know enough that when there's a breakthrough, when there's an answer, when there's a miracle of any kind, he gets the glory. He gets the credit. He's the one who performed it. It may have been our hands, it may have been our words, but honestly, He's the miracle worker. We're just tools in His hands. But when it doesn't work, we don't blame God. We give Him the glory. We give Him the praise. We celebrate His goodness, His kindness. Because nothing about our experience, difficult or not, changes who He is.

We are spending our life trying to discover this wonderful, wonderful Father who is perfect in every way, and our passion, our heart, is to discover that and to make it known. We've got a plant of people that are hurting so deeply because they just don't know what this heavenly father is

like. So we've given our life to this. We're going to get some things good [and] right, we're going to get some things we won't do so well. But we're in a journey like you, like many of you, and we're in this pursuit to see Jesus exalted and a whole generation of people that can accurately and responsively demonstrate the love, the purity and the power of God. This is our passion.

Thank you again. So many of you have helped us. You've prayed with us. You've joined with us. Some of you did so a couple years ago, when we had little Jaxon Taylor in the crisis and the miracle that God performed. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Others of you have sent challenging questions to us, and I thank you as well, because we never want to take anything for granted. We just have this heart to walk in purity, to walk in love, to walk responsibly, and we've said yes to that call, and you helped us. So I want to thank you and I want to bless all of you in Jesus' name. Thank you for being part of our global family.

Johnson's full video message is embedded here.