

Grace Communication 7 - Supplication Communication

a study for the Gulf Coast Baptist Church Bible Institute

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Introduction

An integral part of the believer's communication is a recognition of his position and the position of the Godhead. This understanding is vital for supplication. A humble acceptance of one's inability to solve a problem or find a solution is a key component of supplication. Equally as important is the awareness of the Godhead as the only possible power capable of solving the problem. There is always an unknown component to supplication. This uncertainty may involve the means, method, supply, need, or assistance concerning something in his own life or that of others. By faith the believer casts the situation to the Father, being perfectly willing to accept whatever answer the Father will provide.

Definition

The Verb: The verb *deomai* occurs in the New Testament 22 times in 11 of the New Testament books. Its primary meaning is "to want, lack, in the middle voice it means to stand in need or want (Thayer, Lexicon, p. 129)." Thayer feels that the term means to "ask or beg" when it is applied to communication with God (Ibid.). The verb is translated "pray" (12 times), "beseech" (9x), and "make request" (1x) in the AV.

The Noun: The noun *deasis* occurs 19 times in the New Testament. It is translated as "prayer," "supplication," and "request." The noun conveys the idea of a great need that needs to be met. Hence, it means "a seeking, asking, entreating (Ibid.)." The (-sis) ending on this Greek noun conveys the idea of naming of the action (i. e. its abstract name). The emphasis is upon crying out in the time of need. The desire for help overcomes any inhibitions concerning the presentation of a need to the Father. The believer supplicates indicating that he will accept the response of the Father by faith whatever the answer might be.

Supplication is a cry for help for oneself or others, in which there is an unknown factor whether it be a need or an object.

Some Uses in the Gospels

Christ was the receiver of supplication during earthly ministry. During the presence of Christ on earth in His earthly ministry, men supplicated to Him. This was only true when He was physically present. Luke 5:12; Luke 8:28; Luke 8:38; Luke 9:38, 40. All references are in Luke. Three of the instances of supplication involved a visible physical need in the life of the supplicant. The physical symptoms were a result of either a disease (Luke 5:12) or demonic influence (Luke 8:28; 9:38, 40). Luke, the physician, who had heard such cries for help many times, uses *deomai* because he undoubtedly knew that the possibility of cure was not available from contemporary medical knowledge or techniques. After the cross work of Christ, supplication is only addressed to God the Father.

Christ supplicated for Peter (Luke 22:32). In his deity, Christ knew that Peter would deny him, even the circumstances surrounding this event. The interesting thing is the uncertainty in his humanity that Peter's faith would fail or not. That was still in the realm of "possibility" because his conversion in the book of Acts was a question of his choice. In the realm of his deity, Christ could have realized this information, but it was not necessary to give to Peter at this time in his life. Christ gave Peter the information he needed for the events to occur as they did and for Peter to grow as he did.

Grace Supplication in Action

Supplication is attached to the end of the passage regarding the armor of God. There is often so much going on with Satanic attack that the believer often is not aware of all the variables that might be involved. God directs the believer to supplicate alongside his worship (Eph 6:18).

Paul in his letter to the Philippians (Phil. 1:4-6) shows uncertainty and confidence at the same time. The confidence is a result of his faith that God will complete the work started in the saints at Philippi. The uncertainty is the factor of to what extent this good work that Christ would do in the saints would happen during their life, and what part would be completed when they die or are raptured. This is the possibility in each believer's life. Is that believer going to allow the Spirit to conform them to the image of Christ while they are living, making use of the Eternal (God-quality) Life now?

As Paul is writing to the Romans, he mentions that he has supplicated to God concerning his means to travel to them (Rom 1:10). The uncertainty here is how and when it would happen, if at all. The answer to this uncertainty is found in the book of Acts.

The Macedonians intreated (supplicated to) Paul regarding the opportunity to give (2 Cor 8:4). Because of their poverty, Paul hesitated to ask of them any gifts, they demanded to be allowed to be a part of the process. They trusted Paul to give the answer that would be God's will.

Peter is dealing with Simon in Acts 8 and supplication is recommended to him. Peter tells Simon to have a change of mind, supplicate to God, and perhaps God would forgive his sin. Simon's response was for Peter to supplicate to God on his behalf (Acts 8:22,24). It seems as if Peter was uncertain of whether Simon's faith was a real or a professing faith that was seeking profit.

Cornelius was said to be a suppliant to God as an unsaved man in Acts 10. He was aware of some of the actions a proselyte would take, but was unaware of the facts of the gospel. God made sure that he was sent someone to speak to him. With the "foolishness of preaching" God will save them that believe (1 Cor 1:21). The "always" used in verse 2 can be translated constantly, or on a continual basis, regularly. God made a record of his worship and behavior and sent him a preacher.

Phil 4:6 and 1 Tim 2:1 are passages dealt with extensively in this study already. Supplication is part of the process for the believer to be relieved of anxiety in a Satanic attack, and the believer is to supplicate to the Father for the salvation of all men, so that they are able to live a quiet and peaceable life “above the fray” as it were.

James gives a passage that is often misunderstood, but can be explained with supplication in mind. The James 5:16 passage deals with the following: The Communication (worship and supplication), The Communicator (a righteous man), The Character of the Communication (energized - not carnal [4:1-2], The Certainty of Energy (God’s power to accomplish God’s will). The supplication of a righteous man activates the power of God to accomplish God’s will, especially where the uncertainty is involved. This passage is often preached to teach that a righteous man can change the mind of God and accomplish much. This is a backwards interpretation that does not take into account the uncertainty of the supplicant and the worshiper.

Peter deals with supplication that has a possible “undesirable” answer. In 1 Peter 3:10, he mentions that the Father is aware of our petitions (supplications), just as his eyes are upon us. The passage goes on to say that he is pleased and the believer can be “blessed” if he suffers for righteousness sake. Christ’s suffering on the cross is used as a comparison in this chapter for the believer to measure his own suffering against, just in case the believer thinks his suffering is too great. But the believer petitions God when he is treated unrighteously, and receives an answer that God will allow it, and the believer should still be happy. This is counterintuitive to the “prosperity gospel” being preached in many religious circles.

Conclusion

There is always an area of uncertainty in supplication on the part of the communicator. This uncertainty may involve the means, method, supply, need or assistance concerning something in his own life or that of others. In supplication the communicator throws himself upon God by sheer faith expecting God to Provide in His own unique way and time. Supplication may be made for someone else (1 Timothy 2:1, 2). Supplication may be made for oneself (Philippians 4:6) . Supplication may be made for persons you have never met (cf. Romans 1:10). Supplication is always expressed to the Father. Supplication is a cry for help coming from uncertainty in the believer’s heart. Supplication will be a large part of your communication for yourself and others.