

Living the Christian Life

Sundays@9 – October 16, 2022

Week 5 Doing Prayer

Struggle: Asking His Help

Last week, Awe: Praising His Glory, thanking Him for What He has done
Intimacy: Finding His Grace Self Examination and Confession

Supplication: Strenuous Petition

A third form of prayer is supplication—Asking God for things for yourself, for others, for the world. The primal prayer is a cry for help.

Problem 1 Petitionary prayer can do us harm if we see it as a means to say to God “My will be done”. We are prone to telling God how to run the universe and especially our lives.

Problem 2: We can also err to the side of being too timid and not being strenuous in prayer. By not taking hold of His promises.

Prayer has been called “*Rebellion against the world’s status quo.*” It is a weapon in the war against the forces of darkness. Eph 6:12.

The Power of Prayer

James points out James 5:17, that Elijah, “a man like us” prayed away the rain for 3 1/2 years and then prayed it back as a means of confronting the evil King Ahab. God allowed the rain to be susceptible to Elijah’s prayers.

How God does this, how He maintains control of all things yet still makes prayer and action responsible within history is a great mystery within the bible.

Why is this a “practical” mystery? Because we are told by James, *You do not have because you do not ask God.* Yet we know God’s plan is sovereign and infallible. These two facts are true at once and how this is possible is a mystery to us. If God is completely in control our actions don’t matter and we can be totally passive—or vice versa, our prayers determine what happens...and well that can lead to paralyzing fear.

BUT, if both are true we have the greatest incentive for diligent effort but with the full assurance God is holding us in his hands. We can’t frustrate God’s plans for us



How Should We Ask?

Westminster Shorter Catechism defines prayer: *Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.*

We are to ask God to fill our desires, but for things agreeable to His will. How? By embedding theological reasoning in our prayers and by learning to explicitly tell God “that His will... not mine” be what is done.

The Perennial Question

If God has a plan and He is in charge, why Pray at all?

As we pray for good things, we know we have the ultimate good thing in Him. In God Himself we have the source of all we desire, even if something that we love in this world is lost. If we ask for something that would not be best for us God won't grant it. We have the assurance He will answer the basic desire but in the best form and mode.

Two Purposes of Petitionary Prayer

- **One is external**, To put the world right (“Thy Kingdom come”) James 5:16-18
- **One is internal**, To align our hearts to God (“Thy will be done”) Ps. 4 & Ps. 5

What We Should Ask For

- 1) “Asking for “Our daily bread”. 1) Spiritually 2) Emotionally 3) Materially.
- 2) “Prayers of lament “complaining” Suffering, difficulty, How Long?
- 3) “Waiting on God” Confidence that God hears and patience to wait on Him

If you then, being evil know how to give good gifts to your children,
How Much More shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? Lk
11:11-13