

“God’s Promise of Answered Prayer”

Some have suggested that Jeremiah 33:3 is “God’s phone number,” because He invites us to give Him a call: *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”* How incredible is it that God promises to answer us if we will call to Him? Jeremiah was God’s mouthpiece, charged with delivering mostly bad news to God’s people. Because of his many tears he was known as “the weeping prophet,” but he was bold and brave when communicating God’s message. Due to the deliberate disobedience of God’s people, after ignoring warning after warning, God announced that they would be punished by Babylon. Their homeland would be decimated, and the people would be deported to that pagan land. In the midst of all that mess, though, God gave hope to Jeremiah that the exiles would return, by instructing him to buy some property. They did return, albeit 70 years later, as God had said.

Let’s break Jeremiah 33:3 down into three parts. **First** of all, this verse exhorts us to *call to God*. Don’t make prayer more complicated than it should be. At its core, prayer is simply crying out to God from our hearts. As much as people want to talk to God (and hopefully listen to Him and commune with Him, as well), sometimes we have to be reminded to call out to the Lord. For some reason, we resist reaching out to God, even when we’re going through tough times. Jonah tried to sleep his problems away below deck on a ship during a raging storm. The captain woke him up and asked, *“How can you sleep? Get up and call on your God?”* (see Jonah 1:6). Our sleepiness, and Satan himself, and many other things fight to keep us from crying out to God in prayer – but let’s not allow anything to keep us from calling out to Him. Let’s be sure to “ask God,” and seek Him about the needs in our lives.

Secondly, Jeremiah 33:3 exhorts us to *receive God’s answers*. It’s “spine-tingling” to realize that God promises to answer us when we call out to Him. Let’s be honest, though, sometimes His answer is “No” (the request is wrong), or “Slow” (the timing is wrong), or “Grow” (our motives are wrong). But, when the request is right, the timing is right and our motives are right – it’s so exciting when God says “Go.” *George Müller (1805-1898) was so moved with concern for the homeless children in Bristol, England that he decided something had to be done. With only two cents in his pocket, he decided to start an orphanage. In 60 years, beginning with two cents, George Müller took care of 10,000 orphans. He kept a record of his prayers, and his prayer records filled more than 3,000 pages. His notes show that more than 30,000 prayers were answered. George Müller never made his needs and requests know to other humans—only to God.*

If God answered every prayer the way we wanted Him to, essentially we would be pushing Him off the throne and we would be taking over as God. We should probably be more grateful to God for not answering (the way we wanted Him to) some of the foolish prayers we’ve prayed. It’s tragic when people turn away from God and allow unbelief to fill their hearts when God does not answer their prayers the way they wanted Him to. Jesus told Thomas, *those who believe without seeing are the blessed ones* (see John 20:29). The heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:39-40 *“...were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.”* God had

something better planned for them. Let's resolve to keep praying prayers in line with Scripture, and keep believing in faith, even if we don't see those prayers answered in our lifetime. Let's leave that up to God.

Third, Jeremiah 33:3 exhorts us to *be awestruck by God's greatness*. God goes way beyond what we ask for by showing us great, mighty, inaccessible, unsearchable things we do not know. When we call out to God and experience His answers, we are often overwhelmed by the awesomeness of God Himself, as He comes near, and reveals things that we did not previously understand. When we rely on prayer, we get what God can do. So, let's open the door for God to come in (in all of His majesty) by calling to Him in prayer.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. To make it much more likely that you'll be able to tell your own stories of answered prayer:
 - a) Keep a log/journal record of the requests you make of the Lord (make a note when a prayer is answered)
 - b) Make sure you're praying the right kind of prayers (pray prayers right out of Scripture to make sure they are in line with the will of God)
 - c) Pray "in the name of Jesus" (ask for the things that Jesus would ask for)
2. What tangible steps can you take to demonstrate your hope in God during messy times?
3. Are you trying to run away from your problems? Or bury your head in the sand and pretend they don't exist? Or drown your sorrows in some unhealthy way? Instead, why don't you get up and call on your God?
4. Do you tend to get upset with God when you feel He hasn't answered your prayers the way you wanted Him to?