

The Blessing of Prayer Awaiting the Children of God

As children of the Living God, we are “more than conquerors through Christ who loved us” (Romans 8:37). When we are awakened to the love of God we start to get an understanding of what it means to be a child of God.

“It was for this reason I bow my knee before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:14-19).

Experiencing the reality that we are children of God, whom He loves deeply and personally, provides a profound religious experience.

Such a religious experience of the love of God at work in our life, will not take place until we know God as our father, who finds great joy in meeting our needs.

After teaching His disciples the great our Father prayer, better known as the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 11:9, 10, “I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

To help His disciples understand the power that comes from addressing God as Father, Jesus goes on to explain, “What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (Luke 11:11-13)?

All this sounds pretty direct and to the point, but what about the times we have asked God for something and we did not receive it? Why didn’t He answer our prayers?

Timothy Keller in his book entitled, “Prayer”, answers this question by taking us to Matthew 27:46, where Jesus cries out on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This is the only time that Jesus does not call God His Father.

Keller goes on to explain, “Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that the “cup” of suffering on the cross be taken from him, yet His request was turned down. On the cross itself He cried out, “My God,” but He was forsaken (Matt. 27:46). How could that be? Jesus was the perfect man – He served God with all His heart, soul, and mind, and loved His neighbor as Himself (Mark 12:28-31) and so completely fulfilled the law of God.”

“Sinners deserve to have their prayers go unanswered. Jesus was the only human being in history who deserved to have all His prayers answered because of His perfect life. Yet, He was turned down as if he cherished iniquity in his heart. Why?”

“The answer, of course, is in the gospel. God treated Jesus as we deserve. He took our penalty – so that, when we believe in Him, God can then treat us as Jesus deserved (2 Corinthians 5:21). More specifically, Jesus’ prayers were given the rejection that we sinners merit so that our prayers could have the reception that He merits. That is why, when Christians pray, they have the confidence that they will be heard by God and answered in the wisest way.”

“There has never been a human father who wanted to answer his child’s petition as much as God wants to answer yours. Yet we know that God is not only loving but holy and just. How can he shower blessings down on sinful people who deserve the opposite? The answer is that Jesus got the scorpion and the snake so that we can have the food at the Father’s table. He received the sting and the venom of death in our place” (I Corinthians 15:55; Hebrews 2:15-15; Genesis 3:15).

“We know that God will answer us when we call ‘my God’ because God did not answer Jesus when He made the same petition on the cross. For Jesus, the ‘heavens were as brass’; He got the Great Silence so we could know that God hears and answers.”

It is the power in the name of Jesus that enables me to know that God who is my Father will answer my prayers. Frequently it is a yes, but at those times when it is a no, I can be assured that my Heavenly Father will give me what is best for me.

As children of God you and I have received the spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father! The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him” (Romans 8:15-17).

It is often through suffering that our spiritual eyes are opened and we are able, like Job, to declare, “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you” (Job 42:5).

It is this spiritual experience through, “The spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him (Jesus) that the eyes of your heart enlightened you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Ephesians 1:16-19).

As the eyes of our heart are enlightened through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will know that as His children who love Him, that “All things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Mike Bickle in his book, “Growing in Prayer” says, “two of the primary requests Jesus exhorted us to make of the Father when we pray, are for the release of a greater measure of the Holy Spirit and the release of a greater measure of justice”.

We see this desire for a greater release of the Holy Spirit when Jesus says, “how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” (Luke 11:13).

Bickle goes on to say in “Growing in Prayer”, “that as believers under the new covenant, we already have the Holy Spirit... Therefore, we do not pray for the Lord to give us the Holy Spirit in the sense of the indwelling Spirit rather, we ask Him to release a greater measure of the Spirit in us and through us.”

In addition to praying for a greater release of the Holy Spirit, Jesus tells us to pray for a greater measure of justice. “And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night” (Luke 18:7)?

If we will but look we will see the injustice in the lives of the hurting and homeless all around us. Many nominal Christians are so blinded that they remain silent or even support those who shut down churches like New Life Evangelistic Center, because their congregations are made up of primarily homeless people.

Jesus responded to those who are Christian in name only, and have no concern for justice, by saying, “not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of God, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

When we allow the greedy to trample on the rights of the fatherless, widowed or homeless, we have forgotten the God who made them and called us to pray and defend them.

Experiencing the reality of the Risen Christ in the depths of our very being, gives us the Holy Boldness to directly confront the principalities and powers that oppress those in need.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

As children of God who desire to share the love of God, we will often find ourselves in spiritual warfare. “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil” (Luke 4:1, 2).

Jesus defeated Satan by resisting temptation and responding to the devil with the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God.

Mike Bickle in Chapter Twelve in “Growing in Prayer” states, “I see three components involved in Spiritual warfare prayers. First, we proclaim God’s victory in prayer by agreeing with the supremacy of Jesus, His power, promises, and will. We pray the prayers of the Bible,

remind God of His promises, and make prophetic decrees related to the supremacy of God and His Kingdom purposes.

Second, we confess sin and renounce the works of darkness, thus breaking our agreement with the enemy. As we resist Satan and submit to God and His word, the devil flees from us (James 4:7).

Third, we do the works of the Kingdom, acting in the opposite spirit of the evil characteristics that permeate a specific city or region. For example, in a place where oppression is identified as a spiritual stronghold, the body of Christ should focus on doing acts of generosity, servanthood and so on.”

The shutdown of 1411 Locust in St. Louis was a direct attack from the pits of hell. Souls were getting saved and lives were being changed as a result of the ministry taking place in that building.

Now in the name of Jesus we must come against the ambassadors of Satan, who are determined to keep the New Life Evangelistic Center Church closed. We do this as we stand on the promises of God’s Word, and come against these oppressive spiritual powers through the victory won on the cross by Jesus Christ.

Then as we confess our sins unto the Risen Christ we ask Him to strengthen us “with power through His Spirit in our inner being so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith” (Ephesians 3:16-17).

Now we must remain steadfast, immovable, abounding in the work of Jesus Christ. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

What a marvelous, Heavenly Father we have. He loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins in order that we may be His adopted children. Along with being His children, our Father invites us to pray and experience not only His gifts, which He bountifully provides in response to prayer, but a relationship that lasts for all eternity.

Yours in Christ



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