

Lord Jesus, cause me to know in my daily experience the glory and sweetness of Thy name, and then teach me how to use it in my prayer, so that I may be even like Israel, a prince prevailing with God. Thy name is my passport, and secures me access; Thy name is my plea, and secures me answer; Thy name is my honour and secures me glory. Blessed Name, Thou art honey in my mouth, music in my ear, heaven in my heart, and all in all to my being!--C. H. Spurgeon

I do not mean that every prayer we offer is answered exactly as we desire it to be. Were this the case, it would mean that we would be dictating to God, and prayer would degenerate into a mere system of begging. Just as an earthly father knows what is best for his children's welfare, so does God take into consideration the particular needs of His human family, and meets them out of His wonderful storehouse. If our petitions are in accordance with His will, and if we seek His glory in the asking, the answers will come in ways that will astonish us and fill our hearts with songs of thanksgiving. God is a rich and bountiful Father, and He does not forget His children, nor withhold from them anything which it would be to their advantage to receive.--J. Kennedy Maclean

The example of our Lord in the matter of prayer is one which His followers might well copy. Christ prayed much and He taught much about prayer. His life and His works, as well as His teaching, are illustrations of the nature and necessity of prayer. He lived and laboured to answer prayer. But the necessity of importunity in prayer was the emphasised point in His teaching about prayer. He taught not only that men must pray, but that they must persevere in prayer.

He taught in command and precept the idea of energy and earnestness in praying. He gives to our efforts graduation and climax. We are to ask, but to the asking we must add seeking, and seeking must pass into the full force of effort in knocking. The pleading soul must be aroused to effort by God's silence. Denial, instead of abating or abashing, must arouse its latent energies and kindle anew its highest ardor.

In the Sermon on the Mount, in which He lays down the cardinal duties of His religion, He not only gives prominence to prayer in general and secret prayer in particular, but He sets apart a distinct and different section to give weight to importunate prayer. To prevent any discouragement in praying He lays as a basic principle the fact of God's great fatherly willingness--that God's willingness to answer our prayers exceeds our willingness to give good and necessary things to our children, just as far as God's ability, goodness and perfection exceed our infirmities and evil. As a further assurance and stimulant to prayer Christ gives the most positive and iterated assurance of answer to prayers. He declares: "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." And to make assurance doubly sure, He adds: "For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Why does He unfold to us the Father's loving readiness to answer the prayers of His children? Why does He asseverate so strongly that prayer will be answered? Why does He repeat that positive asseveration six times? Why does Christ on two distinct occasions go over the same strong promises, iterations, and reiterations in regard to the

certainty of prayer being answered? Because He knew that there would be delay in many an answer which would call for importunate pressing, and that if our faith did not have the strongest assurance of God's willingness to answer, delay would break it down. And that our spiritual sloth would come in, under the guise of submission, and say it is not God's will to give what we ask, and so cease praying and lose our case. After Christ had put God's willingness to answer prayer in a very clear and strong light, He then urges to importunity, and that every unanswered prayer, instead of abating our pressure should only increase intensity and energy. If asking does not get, let asking pass into the settled attitude and spirit of seeking. If seeking does not secure the answer, let seeking pass on to the more energetic and clamorous plea of knocking. We must persevere till we get it. No failure here if our faith does not break down.

As our great example in prayer, our Lord puts love as a primary condition--a love that has purified the heart from all the elements of hate, revenge, and ill will. Love is the supreme condition of prayer, a life inspired by love. The 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians is the law of prayer as well as the law of love. The law of love is the law of prayer, and to master this chapter from the epistle of St. Paul is to learn the first and fullest condition of prayer.

Christ taught us also to approach the Father in His name. That is our passport. It is in His name that we are to make our petitions known. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask Me anything in My name, that will I do."

How wide and comprehensive is that "whatsoever." There is no limit to the power of that name. "Whatsoever ye shall ask." That is the Divine declaration, and it opens up to every praying child a vista of infinite resource and possibility.

And that is our heritage. All that Christ has may become ours if we obey the conditions. The one secret is prayer. The place of revealing and of equipment, of grace and of power, is the prayer-chamber, and as we meet there with God we shall not only win our triumphs but we shall also grow in the likeness of our Lord and become His living witnesses to men.

Without prayer the Christian life, robbed of its sweetness and its beauty, becomes cold and formal and dead; but rooted in the secret place where God meets and walks and talks with His own, it grows into such a testimony of Divine power that all men will feel its influence and be touched by the warmth of its love. Thus, resembling our Lord and Master, we shall be used for the glory of God and the salvation of our fellow men.

And that, surely is the purpose of all real prayer and the end of all true service.

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