

The Promise of Answered Prayer

(John 14:13-15)

(Wednesday, August 25th)

Perhaps you have seen the plague: “*Why Pray When You Can Worry!*” Jesus had a better solution: “Why be troubled when you can pray!”

The Disciples were troubled and so was Jesus but He ministered to them out of His trouble (13:21). So can we minister to troubled people out of our troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4).

Jesus gives His disciples (then and now) seven promises that should not only comfort us but enable us to comfort others.

- 1. The Promise of Heaven** (*John 14:1-2*)
- 2. The Promise of the Coming of Christ** (*John 14:3-6*)
- 3. The Promise of Knowing the Father** (*John 14:7-11*)
- 4. The Promise of Doing Greater Works** (*John 14:12*)
- 5. The Promise of Answered Prayer** (*John 14:13-15*)
- 6. The Promise of the Holy Spirit** (*John 14:16-26*)
- 7. The Promise of Peace** (*John 14:27*)

1. Jesus was leaving His disciples but His work will continue through His disciples (14:12). As a matter of fact, His disciples will do greater works for Christ (Acts 1:1-2).

2. Jesus was leaving His disciples but His disciples can still talk to Him in prayer (14:13-14). As a matter of fact, His disciples can fellowship with even more intimately. There were times in His earthly ministry that the disciples did not have access to Jesus physically but now that He is in heaven there is never a time when we cannot pray to Him.

The way the disciples of Christ can do greater works (14:12) is through prayer (14:13-14). The “and” in 14:13 connects the two promises.

BUT there are Conditions to be Met for this Promise of Prayer to be Answered.

We Must Pray in “Jesus’ Name” (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23)

Praying in Jesus’ name is not a magical wane we wave over a prayer that mysteriously guarantees that God will answer. In the model prayer Jesus gave in Matthew 6:9-15, Jesus did not conclude with “In Jesus’ name.” So what does praying in Jesus’ name mean?

1. To Pray in Jesus’ Name Means to have Believed in Jesus (John 14:12, 13)

The name of Jesus is the revelation of His character. In Matthew 1:21, the angel said to Joseph pertaining to Mary, “She shall bring forth a son and you shall call his name JESUS: for he shall save His people from their sins.”

In John 14:12, Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believes on me....” This promise is for believers only. In verse 13, Jesus qualified this promise saying, “and whatsoever **you** shall ask.” The “you” are the disciples of Jesus. Jesus in His model prayer said we should begin our prayer, “Our Father.” We must be sons of God in order to pray to God the Father.

2. To Pray in Jesus’ Name Means Not to Pray Selfishly (James 4:2-3)

We cannot pray in our name or for our sakes. Our prayer cannot be based on who we are but on who He is.

R. A. Torrey tells a story that illustrates this point. He had been in Melbourne, Australia, for a series of meetings. One day as he went up onto the platform to speak, a note was thrust into his hands, which read, ‘Dear Dr. Torrey: I am in a great perplexity. I have been praying for a long time for something that I am confident is according to God’s will, but I do not get it. I have been a member of the Presbyterian Church for thirty years, and have tried to be a consistent one all the time. I have been superintendent in the Sunday school for twenty-five years, and an elder in the church for twenty years; and yet God does not answer my prayer and I cannot understand it. Can you explain it to me?’

Torrey took the note to the platform with him and read it. Then, because he had rightly detected something in the letter’s tone, he answered like this: ‘It is perfectly easy to explain it. This man thinks that because he has been a consistent church member for thirty years, a faithful Sunday school superintendent for twenty-five years, and an elder in the church for twenty years, that God is under obligation to answer his prayer. He is really praying in his own name, and God will not hear our prayer when we approach Him in that way. We must, if we would have God answer our prayers, give up any thought that we have any claims upon God (James Montgomery Boice. *An Expostional Commentary. Vol 4 Peace in Storm, John 13-17*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999, page 1101).

James wrote, “You have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you might consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:2-3).

3. To Pray in Jesus’ Name Means to Pray for what Jesus Desires (John 15:1-7)

Jesus prayed in the Garden, “Not my will but your will be done.” The Psalmist taught, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4).

Jesus later on this final sermon added to our knowledge about praying in His name. The better we know Jesus the better we can pray in His name. The way we know Him better, in whose name we are praying, is by knowing His word better.

In John 15:7, Jesus added, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.”

4. To Pray in Jesus' Name Means to Pray for God's Glory (John 14:13)

Prayer is not so much me getting something from God as it is me giving something to God: the glory He deserves. Listen to Jesus prayer the night before His crucifixion the next morning: "I have glorified you on the earth: I have finished the work which you gave me to do" (John 17:4).

How did Jesus glorify the Father on earth? By living without having a place to lay his head, by being forsaken by all his disciples, by being rejected by the very people He came to help, and by being beaten and crucified.