

## Praying In The Name Of Jesus

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, whatever you may ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you. Until now, you have asked nothing in My name. Now I say, ask and you will receive so your joy may be complete" (John 16:23 & 24).

"I tell you honestly, if two of you agree on earth concerning anything they desire, it will be done for them by My Father Who is in heaven, for where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19 & 20).

When we pray, the name of the Lord Jesus has to be glorified and exalted (2 Thessalonians 1:12). 'God highly exalted Jesus and gave to Him the name above every name so at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and every tongue should confess that Jesus the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Philippians 2:9 to 11). Using the name of Jesus, invokes the essence, character, nature, Messianic rule of Jesus plus the high authority of God Himself. We need to be careful we pray with the correct attitude, motive and most importantly, in the perfect Will of God. It is pointless praying for something that is not His Will or is out of line with the scriptures. 'This is the boldness we have in Him, if we ask anything according to His Will He listens to us. If we know He listens to us, whatever we ask, we know we have the petitions we have asked of Him' (1 John 5:14 & 15). Believing in the holy name of Jesus (His Hebrew name is Yeshua) is not an option, it is a commandment from God. 'This is His commandment; we should believe in the name of His Son Yeshua the Messiah and love one another just as He commanded. Those who keep His commandments remain in Him and He in them. By the Holy Spirit Who He gave to us, we know He remains in us' (1 John 3:23 & 24).

When we pray, we all need to be careful to have the correct attitude. In ancient times, invoking the name of a god or idol called up the character of that cursed thing, not only in the mind of the one praying but also as an object of worship. The same rather crude notion has often been assumed when using the phrase, 'praying in the name of Jesus' as though the sound of the holy name of Jesus is a magic formula or has some kind of magic powers to give us whatever we want. The name of Jesus in itself when spoken with the wrong attitude has no power and we can see that when unsaved people use the name of Jesus in vain or as an expletive. The holy name of Jesus must be used correctly and with the correct attitude, and we should be walking in the Spirit when we come before God in prayer. The Bible says several times to pray while walking in the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit makes sure our prayers are uttered with the correct attitude. 'I ask you brothers, by our Lord Jesus and by the love of the Holy Spirit, strive together with me in your prayers to God for me' (Romans 15:30). 'With all prayer and requests, pray at all times in the Holy Spirit and be watchful in all perseverance and requests for all the disciples' (Ephesians 6:18).

Many supernatural miracles can occur when we pray in the name of Jesus and when our attitude is right with God. Jesus said, "These signs will accompany those who believe. In My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues, they may be bitten by snakes with no ill effect and if they accidentally drink any deadly thing it will in no way hurt them, they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover" (Mark 16:17). Peter said to the disabled man, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus the Messiah of Nazareth, get up and walk!" (Acts 3:6). In this instance, Peter used the complete name and title of Jesus; 'Jesus the Messiah of Nazareth'. The title of Nazareth means 'Branch'. That word comes from the prophecy, 'A Twig (a young Shoot) will come out of the stem (family blood-line) of Jesse, a Branch out of his roots will bear (spiritual) fruit' (Isaiah 11:1). When Peter spoke to the disabled man, he was speaking out the whole existence and blood-line of Jesus plus invoking His Holy Messianic rule. Peter had the correct attitude and thus the complete healing was achieved.

Jesus implied very strongly, praying with the wrong attitude brings down a curse, not a blessing. "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses and as a pretence you make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation" (Matthew 23:13). When Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer, He inferred God's Will would be done through prayer with a worshipful attitude. Once again, Jesus used the word 'hypocrite' to describe people who pray with the wrong attitude. "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites for they love to stand and pray in the assemblies and in the corners of the streets so they may be seen by people. Most certainly I tell you, they have received all the reward they will get. But when you pray, enter into your private room and shut your door then pray to your Father Who is in secret, and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly. When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do for they think they will be heard for their much speaking. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray like this, (or in other words, pray with this attitude). 'Our Father Who is in heaven, holy is Your name. Your Kingdom will come. Your Will be done in heaven as it is done on earth. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Bring us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the

glory forever, Amen” (Matthew 6:5 to 13). Jesus said, “Do not use vain repetitions.” Vain or useless repetitions is speaking with a lot of endless talking like repeating the rosary, prayer beads or prayer wheels over and over again without any precise request or evidence of repentance, commitment or a change of attitude. God does not listen to vain repetitions nor does he listen to prayers, prayed with an attitude of selfishness or prayed with the wrong motive. ‘You ask but do not receive because you ask with wrong motives. You ask so you may use it for your own pleasures’ (James 4:3).

There is a terrifying result when we pray with the wrong motives or attitudes. Notice what Jesus said to people who had enjoyed supernatural answers to prayer but used His name with the wrong attitude. “Many will tell Me on Judgement Day, ‘Lord, Lord, we prophesied in Your name, in Your name we cast out demons and in Your name we did many mighty works’. But I will tell them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work iniquity’” (Matthew 7:22 & 23). Sadly, there are people who attend church and believe they are doing the right thing but if their heart is not right with God and they have never drawn close to the Son of God, Jesus will reject those people on Judgement Day.

To achieve healing and deliverance from evil forces, we have to know Jesus personally, not just speak His name. We cannot achieve results by invoking prayer based on hearsay, even by using the name of Jesus. Many people know about Jesus and could be called His ‘fans’ but they do not know Him personally. A worldly example of this is people who idolise a rock ‘n’ roll singer, know about him and may collect memorabilia but they do not know him personally, will never meet him and cannot use his name to buy things. If people do not know Jesus as their personal Saviour and Guide, they could be in for a terrible shock when they try to use His name as the Bible reveals. ‘Some of the itinerant Jews, exorcists, took on themselves to invoke over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus saying, “We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” There were seven sons of a man named Sceva, a Jewish chief priest who did this. The evil spirit answered, “Jesus I know and Paul I know but who are you?” The man in whom the evil spirit dwelt, leaped on them, overpowered them and prevailed against them so they fled out of the house naked and wounded’ (Acts 19:13 to 16). Notice here, evil spirits have the ability to think, speak and will defend their territory with violence when they choose to, if we pray in the name of Jesus with the wrong attitude and without a personal relationship with Jesus. Further to this, when we know Jesus on a personal level, the evil spirits are always fully aware of our relationship with Him. Evil spirits need a body to possess and when they dwell in a person’s mind, they would consider that person’s body their ‘territory’ and do not give it up without a fight. Jesus told us, some evil spirits can only be overcome by prayer and fasting. ‘The disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” Jesus said to them, “The only way this kind can come out is by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:28 & 29).

There is another condition we have to meet before God will hear our prayers, and that is forgiveness. Jesus said, “I tell you, whatever you pray and ask for, believe you have received it and you will have it. Whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so your Father Who is in heaven may forgive you for all your sins but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father in heaven forgive you for your sins” (Mark 11:24 to 26). If we ever hold unforgiveness towards anyone for any reason, our prayers will be blocked and God will ignore our prayers even if we do pray in His name. Worse than that, if we harbour unforgiveness, God Himself will allow the devil to torment us for an unspecified time. Jesus said unforgiveness is wickedness and because He has forgiven us for every sin we have committed or will commit in the future, we have no right to hold unforgiveness towards anyone. Jesus spoke this parable. “You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you asked me. You should have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had mercy on you.” The king was angry and delivered the wicked servant to the tormentors until he could pay all that he owed. So My Heavenly Father will also do to you if you do not each forgive your brother from your hearts for his misdeeds” (Matthew 18:32 to 35).

We receive our eternal life through the name of Jesus. He did so many miracles the disciples could not record them all, as Apostle John wrote, “Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book but these (miracles) are written so you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and by believing (this fact) you may have (eternal) life in His name’ (John 20:30 & 31). Living with Jesus every day and emulating His actions, declares to those around us we are saved. Even if we cannot openly teach the Gospel, our lives should be a witness for the name of Jesus. When we live under the banner of the name of Jesus we should have a boldness to preach and teach about salvation through Jesus with a strength no man nor persecution can quench. ‘Barnabas took Paul to the apostles who declared to them how he (Paul) had seen the Lord in the way and that he had spoken to Him, and how at Damascus Paul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus’ (Acts 9:27). ‘Barnabas and Paul are men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah’ (Acts 15:25 & 26). ‘As we (the apostles) stayed there (in Caesarea) for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming to us and taking Paul’s belt, he bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So will the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt and will deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’” When we

heard these things, both we and the apostles pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem but Paul said, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:10 to 13).

We are saved in the name of Jesus, we pray in the name of Jesus, live in the name of Jesus, we preach in the name of Jesus and we are also to be baptised in the name of Jesus. Just as an ambassador represents the country he is from and speaks up on behalf of the government and leadership of his country, so we as disciples are ambassadors who represent our Spiritual Government and Leadership. 'We are ambassadors on behalf of Jesus, as though God were entreating by us, we ask you on behalf of Jesus, be reconciled to God' (2 Corinthians 5:20). 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). 'When they believed Philip's preaching the Gospel concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus the Messiah, they were baptised, both men and women' (Acts 8:12). 'When they heard the Gospel they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with other tongues and prophesied' (Acts 19:5 & 6). 'No one should forbid water so those who have received the Holy Spirit should be baptised. He commanded them to be baptised in the name of Jesus the Messiah' (Acts 10:47 & 48). 'So why do you wait? Arise, be baptised and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord' (Acts 22:16).

We are washed (spiritually cleansed), sanctified, justified, united, sealed and made righteous, all in the name of Jesus. 'To the assembly of God ... those who are sanctified in Jesus, called to be disciples with all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah in every place, both theirs and ours ... Through the name of our Lord Jesus our Messiah, all of you speak the same thing and let there be no divisions among you, but so you may be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment' (1 Corinthians 1:2 & 10). 'Such (sinners) were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Holy Spirit of our God' (1 Corinthians 6:11). 'Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Jesus' (Colossians 3:17). 'God's firm foundation stands having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who accepts the name of the Lord, depart from unrighteousness"' (2 Timothy 2:19).

The name of Jesus is so powerful when used in the correct context, it frightened the Jewish leaders during the time of the apostles. The apostles were forbidden to mention the name of Jesus. They were threatened then they were sorely beaten for preaching and teaching in the name of Jesus. "So this spreads no further among the (Jewish) people, let us threaten them (the apostles) so from now on they will not speak to anyone in this name." The high priests called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, but Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than listen to God, judge for yourselves for we cannot help telling everyone about the things we saw and heard." When they had further threatened the apostles, the high priests let them go finding no way to punish them because of the people for everyone glorified God for what was being done ... Being let go, they came to their own group of disciples and reported everything the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When the group of disciples heard it, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and prayed, "O Lord, you are God Who made heaven, earth, the sea and all that is in them ... Now Lord, look at their threats and grant to your servants freedom to speak Your word with all boldness, while You stretch out Your hand to heal and may signs and wonders be done through the name of Your Holy Servant Jesus." When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were gathered together. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the Word of God with boldness' (Acts 4:17 to 31).

Later on, the high priest questioned them, "We strictly commanded you not to teach in this name. Behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this Man's blood on us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men." One man stood up in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law honoured by all the people and commanded to put the apostles out for a little while. He said to them, "You men of Israel, be careful concerning these men and what you are about to do ... Now I tell you, withdraw from these men (the apostles) and leave them alone, for if this work is of men it will be overthrown, but if it is of God you will not be able to overthrow it and you would be found even to be fighting against God Himself!" They agreed with him. Summoning the apostles, they beat them and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. The apostles departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for Jesus' name. Every day in the temple and at home, they never stopped teaching and preaching about Jesus the Messiah' (Acts 5:28 to 42).

Many people think they can ask for the most outrageous things and because they ask using the name of Jesus, they think God will give them anything they want. That is in reality, not correct. Look at our personal history. Do we actually receive absolutely everything we ask for? Obviously not. There are many conditions

attached to having prayers answered whether we use the name of Jesus or not. Verses like, 'Whatever things you ask for in prayer, believing, you will receive' (Matthew 21:22). 'Whatever you ask of God, God will give you' (John 11:22). 'Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do so the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it' (John 14:13 & 14). 'If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you desire and it will be done for you ... Whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you' (John 15:7 & 16). 'In that day you will ask me no questions. Most certainly I tell you, whatever you may ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you. Until now, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask and you will receive so your joy may be complete' (John 16:23 & 24). These verses make it seem so easy; just ask for whatever we want and if we believe hard enough we will receive, but it is not that way at all. God has attached many conditions to having our prayers answered and there are many things that block our prayers from being heard. What can stop our prayers being answered? If we hold unforgiveness towards any person for any reason our prayers will not be heard as mentioned earlier. If we hold anger towards any person or towards God our prayers will not be heard. Our prayers will not be answered if our request is not God's Will. We cannot pray with the wrong motive or attitude. Our timing may be wrong even if our prayer is right. Sometimes God has to move obstacles out of the way before He can answer our prayers. We could be praying with a selfish motive. God hinders the prayers of any man who does not treat his wife with respect (1 Peter 3:7). Occasionally, the devil can step in and hinder the answer to our prayer even if God has heard and is intending to answer (Daniel 10:12 & 13). We need to examine our own hearts and attitudes to see if there is anything stopping our prayers being answered.

Praying in the name of Jesus is not a magic formula. Everything has to be in place for our prayers to be heard. Having done everything we know, if our prayers are still not answered, we need to realise God is sovereign and He always has the last say on every matter. Even when we know something is God's Will and it does not happen, we have to submit our will to His authority and accept His final say. Even when promises are written in the scriptures, God does not always keep those promises for every person. For example Jesus said, "Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children or lands for My name's sake, will receive one hundred times more and will inherit eternal life' (Matthew 19:29). "I promise you, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children or land for My sake and for the sake of the Gospel, but they will receive one hundred times more now in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land, with persecutions (and problems) and in the age to come, they receive eternal life' (Mark 10:29 & 30). Peter said, "We have left everything and followed You." Jesus said to them, "I tell you, there is no one who has left house, wife, brothers, parents or children for the Kingdom of God's sake, who will not receive many times more in this life and eternal life in the world to come" (Luke 18:28 to 30). What happened to the Apostles? Did they receive these promises while on earth? No, John was exiled to Patmos where he was forced to live in a grotto until he died and the others were murdered for their faith. They received the promise of persecutions and problems but they did not receive the houses, land and families mentioned in these verses. The Lord has promised to heal all our diseases, sicknesses and infirmities yet many of us are not healed. Apostle Paul cried out for healing but the Lord told him, "My grace is enough for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9), and Paul died, never having been healed while on earth. The Bible mentions many righteous people, some of whom received promises they claimed but others never received promises but suffered terribly. Notice this verse ... 'All these (people), having had testimony (of Jesus) given to them through their faith, did not receive the promise' (Hebrews 11:39). This confirms, not all promises made by God are for every person and praying in the name of Jesus does not change that.

All we can do is submit to our sovereign Lord and realise our lives on earth are short and once we are in glory with the Lord for all eternity, our unanswered prayers will either be forgotten or the Lord will fulfil His promises to us then. As regard to healing we may not have received on earth, the Bible says the leaves on the Tree of Life which we will be able to partake of in heaven, are there for our healing (Revelation 22:2). In regards to a house Jesus said, "In My Father's house (in heaven) there are many mansions ... I am going to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Disappointments, sorrow and tears will not exist. 'Jesus has destroyed death forever! The Lord God will wipe away tears off all faces. He will take the reproach of His people off all the earth for God has spoken it. It will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God! We have waited for Him and He will save us! This is God! We have waited for Him. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!' (Isaiah 25:8 & 9). 'God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more' (Revelation 21:4).

Amen and God bless you.

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