

The Privilege of Prayer

As we live in such uncertain times, I urge us all to be more committed and confident in the **privilege of prayer**. *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (Heb. 4:14,16).

Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who has reconciled us to God, who as our Great High Priest intercedes for us in prayer, is also our great teacher on prayer. In the Upper room discourse, Jesus succinctly and concisely captures the heart of prayer. Jesus teaches us of the **power of prayer**. *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name”* (Jn. 14:13). Jesus is not advocating a “name it and claim it, blab it and grab it kind of spirituality.” God is not the Cosmic Santa Claus. Yet do not mistake the gravity of His assertion. Prayer is powerful. *“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father”* (Jn. 14:12). Then Jesus says, *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name...”* (14:13). Prayer changes things!

This does not diminish the sovereignty of God nor exalt human means. Prayer is the divinely appointed means by which the Sovereign One accomplishes His purposes. The Eternal God not only establishes His certain plans and purposes, but also has ordained prayer as the human agency through which we participate. Prayer is powerful!

Secondly, Jesus teaches us the **purpose of prayer**. *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the son may bring glory to the Father”* (Jn. 14:13). The purpose of prayer is for the glory of the Father. This echoes the purpose of all life. *“Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do it all for the glory of God.”* In His

earthly life, Jesus said, *"...I always do what pleases the Father"* (Jn. 8:29). In His ascended heavenly life, where He sits at His Father's right hand, ruling as King and interceding as our High Priest; Christ does it all for the glory of the Father. Effective, empowering prayer is prayer in Jesus' name, for the glory of the Father.

Why pray for the glory of God? Primarily we pray for God's glory because God is worthy of all glory. *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory"* (Is. 6:3). In addition, God's glory is what we need. The Biblical word, "glory" means weightiness or heaviness. To glorify something or someone is to give weight to it. To glorify something or someone is to make that something or someone the center or central reality of our lives. To glorify God, whether in prayer, thought patterns, or through our lives is to make Him the central reality.

As Christians, we profess belief in the Creator God of the Universe, whom we call Abba, Father, through faith in Jesus Christ. We profess we believe in the God of the Bible, "who has called us into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. 1:9), who promises us if *"He is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things"* (Rom. 8:31-32). Is our weight, our trust in Him? Are our lives, our prayers, focused on Him or us? Could it be possible that talk of the power of prayer is rhetoric without reality, because our prayers are focused on our problems, our needs and us, and not on God?

What we really need is to fill our prayers and thought patterns with who God is, whose we are and who we are in Christ. At the root of so much of our anxious, fearful and discouraging thoughts is our sorry attempt at being the center of the universe. Many of us may weigh more than we should but not enough to

carry the burden of our circumstances and world.

Lastly, Jesus teaches us the **parameters of prayer**. Powerful and purposeful prayer is "in Jesus' name." *"You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it"* (Jn. 14:14). What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name?

We pray to the God of the universe in Jesus' name... *"There is no other name under heaven given to men by whom we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Jesus says, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (Jn. 14:6). Many people are angry because they prayed and God did not do what they wanted. Others are depressed because they do not feel worthy to ask God for anything. I suggest they are coming in their own name and not in Jesus' name.

The humble presupposition of the privilege of prayer is that we deserve nothing. We have no merit or righteousness of our own. Yet when we come in Jesus' name, we come as His daughters and sons. In Jesus' name, the invitation is to, *"Ask and it will be given..."* *"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him"* (Matt. 7:7, 9-11).

To pray in Jesus' name solidifies our commitment to align our lives with Him. Prayer is not a wish list. It is our commitment to seek and glorify the One who is the central reality of our lives and of the whole universe. To pray in Jesus' name is to live and express in prayer, "Your will be done."

Great Peace in the Lord,
Eddie