



### **John 16:23-27**

#### **The Importance of Prayer in Jesus' Name**

**23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.**

**24 "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.**

**25 " These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.**

**26 "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;**

**27 "for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.**

I became a Freemason two years before I became a Christian, and one of the things about the secret rituals of the Lodge is that there is an altar and a Bible and lot of praying of written prayers. All of these prayers are offered up to God as “the Grand Architect of the Universe”, and all of them are closed by the person praying with a simple amen, which is then echoed by the other members of the lodge: “So Mote it Be”

Now before I became a Christian, I wasn't a praying person, and the prayers in the Lodge were just ritual to me, I was more concerned that I would remember to say “So Mote it Be” at the right time. But after I became a Christian, everything changed. I became a praying person. And as I was reading the Words of my Savior Jesus Christ I couldn't help but be struck by his commands to pray and make our requests in HIS NAME.

Not just in these verses, but also in places like:

***John 14: 13 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.***

***14 "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.***

***John 15:16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.***

And the problem was I wasn't praying in Christ's name in the Lodge. Now my Lodge brothers noticed that I'd become all religious and they asked me to become the Lodge Chaplain, and so I started

sneaking “in your Sons name we pray” into the end of prayers and at first they gave me some good natured ribbing about it, but eventually I started to get “concerned talks.” Eventually I realized I couldn’t go on, the issue of Christless prayer and the Deism and salvation by good works that were part and parcel of lodge ritual were incompatible with my Faith in Christ and so I left the lodge and have never regretted it.

But why must Christians pray in Christ’s name, what does it mean and why is it so important?

Well first praying in Christ’s name is an acknowledgement that in our fallen and Sinful State we cannot come into the throne room of a Holy, Holy, Holy God, and ask Him what we will as Habakkuk confessed of God in Hab. 1:13 *“You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness.”*

We also cannot hope to come before Him as though we had some sort of virtue or righteousness of our own that would make us presentable: As Isaiah 64:6 puts it *“But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.”*

Neither can we come to the father because we have done something for him or we will do something for him “If you’ll just get me out of this, I’ll...” What can we add to the Lord? What can we give Him, who says in Psalm 50:12 *“For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.”*

Praying in Christ’s name means we do not come asking things of the father in our name, relying on the empty virtue of our works as I once did in the Masonic lodge. It means we come humbly, relying on the merit of Christ, we come cleansed of sin by His blood and having His own virtue imputed to us. It is this that allows us to stand before God and ask as sons.

Now Jesus says to the Disciples that this is the way that they will supplicate the father “in that day” and the context of what He has been telling them lets us know that “in that day”, means after his resurrection.

The purpose of all this is that their Joy may be full.

We are persecuted for his sake, but Jesus assures us that the Father will also BLESS US for his sake

Now when Jesus tells them **“whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you”** He doesn’t mean that this is a magic formula and all you have to do is simply “tag on” the words “in Jesus name” to whatever your heart desires and you will get it. Asking in Christ’s name means asking in accordance with Christ’s will and His nature, it means we must come asking not for anything we want, but for what in Christ we need: **“Prayer is not a means by which we get God to do what we want,” says Kent Hughes, “Rather, it is a means by which God does through us what HE wants.”**

To ask in Christ’s name means also to come depending upon Christ’s as the only mediator between man and God. We are saying this we ask not on the basis of our work, but Christ’s work on the cross, this we ask not on the basis of our merit, but Christ’s, this we ask in harmony with his revealed will,

Now if you will understand all of that, you will understand that praying in Christ’s name is something that only someone who really has been united to Christ by faith can do. If you are not washed by his blood, if you are not clothed in his righteousness, if you are opposed to His will, then you cannot pray

in His name. You may tack on His name, but it is the living relationship and not merely the use of the name that is vital. The name of Jesus is not a magic word:

*Acts 19:13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."*

*14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.*

*15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"*

*16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*

*17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.*

Now when Jesus says in verse 24 "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." He doesn't mean that the disciples have never prayed to the father before, but what he does mean is The disciples had not been basing their petitions upon this ground, because they did not yet fully understand the need for His mediatorial work on the cross, but after He finished His work and rose from the dead they would, that is why he goes on to say in Verse 25 **"These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.**

He assures them that after the resurrection all of the things that had seemed so unclear will become clear. Because in that day they will understand the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, In that day they will understand why He had to go to the cross, why He had to die for them. All of the things that had come before will be clear.

If I can give you a flawed analogy, a while back odd things kept happening to Mike Baron at work, he couldn't understand them [Surprise party] they became clear.

So from now on, there must be a change, they must "Keep on asking in HIS name." and As Hendriksen puts it - *"Anyone who asks in the spirit of Christ's revelation — hence, according to God's will, for the furtherance of his glory, on the basis of Christ's merits — will receive. — And the purpose which the Lord has in mind is this: that your joy may be full. Through constant fellowship with God in prayer and through receiving answers to prayer, whatever was lacking in the disciples' joy will be supplied, until the cup of joy is filled to the brim."*

Now in verse 26 there is statement that sometimes trips people up **"I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;"** What does that mean? Well let us read it in the context of both verses 26-27

**26 "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;**

**27 "for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.**

The father's love is extended to believers on the basis of their confirmed love and settled faith in Jesus, He is the mediator between man and God, he restores the broken relationship via his sacrifice at the cross and because of that we ourselves can go into the throneroom. It is not as though Jesus has to

carry the message in for us. He does not have to PERSUADE the Father to be gracious to us any more, rather because of His completed work, and their relationship by Faith to Him, the Father now *Loves* them.

***Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.***

***11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.***

I hope you see therefore that the state of your relationship with God the Father depends entirely on your relationship to God the Son: LOOK at verse 27 - ***“for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.”*** The love of the Father is conditioned on our loving Jesus the Son and believing, that He came forth from God the Father.

Please consider that that statement which is addressed so positively to BELIEVERS could just as easily be stated conversely to unbelievers: “for the Father Himself does not love you, because you have not loved men, and have not believed that I came forth from God.”

Take if from Jesus, the unbeliever is not reconciled to God the Father, and cannot enter directly into the throne room of grace and ask what He will

**1<sup>st</sup> Application:** Yesterday at the conference one of the things that was discussed was the almost universally tepid turnout at prayer meetings, and indeed if there was great deficiency in all the PCA churches I have been to, it is in prayer both corporately and privately. When we ask why aren't we being blessed, why is our joy and consolation in fact one of the things I really want to ask Pastor Harrell about were his prayer meetings.

Robert Murray McCheyne - “Continue in prayer. How many messages have been carried to you publicly and from house to house, and yet how little success! I bless God for all the tokens He has given us, that the Spirit of God has not departed from the Church of Scotland—that the glory is still in the midst of her. Still the Spirit has never yet been shed on us abundantly. The many absentees on the forenoon of the Sabbaths, the thin meetings on Thursday evenings, the absence of men from all meetings for the worship of God, the few private prayer meetings, the little love and union among Christians—all show that the plentiful rain has not yet fallen to refresh our corner of the heritage. Why is this? This is the day of Christ's power—why are the people not made willing? Let James give the answer: “Ye have not, because ye ask not.” “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

How many things that seemed impossible Church asked for and RECEIVED. Things so incredible even they couldn't believe them:

They prayed for the release of Peter in Acts 12 and after he was released even they couldn't believe it.

Pray

**2<sup>nd</sup> Application:** If you want to be able to experience the fullness of this Joy, you MUST first have closed with Jesus!