

Monday, August 8, 2011 - How do you view prayer?

**Matthew 7:7-11 – “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”**

This passage from our Saviour is a wonderful reminder of the precious promise we are given regarding prayer. “Ask,” He said, “and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” He made other similar promises.

- ❖ **Matthew 21:22 - And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.**
- ❖ **John 14:13-14 - 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 anything in my name, that will I do.**
- ❖ **John 15:16 - Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.**

The Holy Spirit also made similar promises in other Scriptures.

**\* James 5:16 - Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication (prayer) of a righteous man availeth much in its working.**

**\* 1 John 3:22 - and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight.**

In spite of all these and other precious promises of God to hear and answer our prayers, there are people who find praying a disappointment. I'd probably be safe in saying that most of us do at times. They say their prayers seem not to avail. God seems very far away and doesn't hear them.

But we need to understand some very fundamental truths about our prayer life:

- ❖ God Listens - The Bible doesn't teach us to pray to an angel or to a saint, not to the Holy Spirit, not even to Jesus Christ himself, but to God in the name of His Son Jesus Christ. God the father listens as the one to whom we pray.
  - **Matthew 6:6, 9 – But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly... After this manner therefore pray ye. Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name...**

The Son listens as the one through whom we pray. In fact three words sum up his involvement in our prayer lives; intercession, mediation and litigation.

- ❖ Intercession – Christ speaks to God on our behalf
  - **Rom. 8:34 - Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.**
  - **Heb. 7:25 - Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**
- ❖ Mediation – Jesus understands us, intervenes for us and takes our side
  - **1 Timothy 2:5 – For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.**
  - **Hebrews 2:17-18 - Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.**
- ❖ Christ understands the trials and temptations we face in this life.
  - **Hebrews 4:15 – For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**
- ❖ Litigation – Jesus serves as our own personal advocate
  - **1 John 2:1-2 - My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

- ❖ We speak to God when we pray, but we do so through our Lord
  - **Ephesians 5:20 - giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
  - It is important to always pray through the Son or in his name!
  
- ❖ The Holy Spirit listens as the one with whom we pray.
  - **Romans 8:26 – Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered**

Some will state that the Holy Spirit directly operates on the individual, separate and apart from the Word based on this passage. **Rom. 8:26** in no way teaches a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of an individual which enables one to pray. The Holy Spirit, in this passage, is not empowering, energizing, or enabling the individual to do anything. The infirmity here mentioned is that we know not how to pray as we ought to pray. What we already know about how to pray, we learned through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. There are urgings and longings in the heart of a sincere child of God that he cannot express. He has a feeling of helplessness, or of a deep need, without knowing what that need really is, or what would meet the need. It is what Paul calls "unutterable groanings." It is the groaning within ourselves mentioned in **Rom. 8:23**. These groanings are silent groanings -- unutterable feelings of need. The Spirit helps us in these groanings, for he understands our needs and longings and can make them known to God through Jesus the Son.

God intends for his children to come to him in prayer, believing that he can and will do what is best for them. He instructs us how to approach him in **Hebrews 4:16** when we are told, **“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

How do you approach God in your prayer life? How much faith do you have that he will take care of the needs and desires of your heart? Do you approach him with an attitude of "My will be done" or "Thy will be done"?

God knows your every need, desire, want and wish. Do you treat him with the respect and reverence he deserves as you approach his throne of grace and mercy?