

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 1.7.2024

ASK ANYTHING IN MY NAME

I. INTRODUCTION

- We are going to take the next few weeks to orient ourselves to pray more and our teachings will be focused on an area of prayer to grow our understanding of prayer and provoke us to more prayer.
- We will be specifically praying for God to make us a praying church that sees God do surprising things in us and with us for his glory.

John 14:13-14

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me[e] anything in my name, I will do it.

II. THE INVITATION TO ASK

- Baptist Catechism Q.105 What is Prayer?
- Answer: Prayer is an offering up our desires to God, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, believing, with confession of sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.
- Prayer is the expression of our thankfulness and dependence on God through our requests.
- God has ordained prayer and he has promised to answer prayer.

- From the very beginning God has invited man to commune with him through prayer.
- We are invited to pray.
- **John 14:12** "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.
- That is an astonishing claim Jesus makes.
- This passage is misused and misunderstood. It does not mean that you will do greater miracles than Jesus performed.
- What Jesus was preparing his disciples for was what was going to take place after his departure.
- He was casting a vision of the global advancement of the gospel mission.
- Jesus's earthly ministry was limited geographically and temporally.
- But his disciples would carry out his ministry far beyond the region of Judea, they would reach greater numbers of people and the impact will have lasting effects.
- And that's why Jesus invites them to "ask anything."
- They are invited to avail themselves through prayer of anything they would need in order to accomplish what they were called to do.
- What is the limit to what they can ask for? There is no limitation, it is "whatever you ask..."

- We are invited to ASK for anything
- But in the context of our passage, it is related to the furtherance of Christ's work through all of his disciples.
- This elevates our asking beyond the normal things that are on our prayer lists.
- Our prayers are mainly about our personal problems while the biblical prayers are mainly concerned with Christ's purposes.
- The invitation and privilege that we have to ask anything offers so much more.

III. THE QUALIFICATION FOR OUR ASKING

- Jesus gives us the key to confident prayer.
 - He tells us to ask for things, "in his name."
 - Asking in his name is what qualifies our prayer to be heard and answered.
 - But what does that mean?
 - Sadly, Jesus's name has been tagged at the end of many silly and crazy prayer requests.
 - For some, tacking the name of Jesus to the end of a prayer request is like a magic incantation.
 - What does Jesus mean that we should ask in his name?
 - In biblical times, names were taken seriously and have deep significance.
 - A person's name is about the sum total of their character.
- In Scripture, God reveals his character through His names.
 - El-Shaddai, "The Lord God Almighty"
 - Adonai, "Lord, Master"
 - Jehovah-Tsidkenu, "The Lord our Righteousness"
 - Jehovah-Jireh, "The Lord will provide"
 - El Elyon, "The Lord Most High"
 - To the Israelites, God's revealed covenant name, "Yahweh," was so holy and revered that they would not say it out loud.
 - God's names equate to his character.
- To pray in the name of Jesus is about praying in a manner that is consistent with his character.
 - So that when we ask, we believe that what we are asking for is what Jesus himself would ask for if he were in our circumstance or situation.
 - "In Jesus's name" is an endorsement that our prayer is consistent with the character, mind, desire, and purpose of the name.
 - Samuel Chadwick wrote, "*To pray in the name of Christ is to pray as one who is at one with Christ, whose mind is the mind of Christ, whose desires are the desires of Christ, and his purpose is one with that of Christ.*"
- Tagging our prayer with "in Jesus's name" is not a prayer formula for answered prayer.
 - His name is what makes it possible for us to approach God.
 - When we pray in his name we are professing our desperate need of him and our trust in his righteousness alone as the reason our prayers are even heard in the first place.
 - Our confidence in prayer is not that we are worthy of ourselves.
 - Our confidence is that Jesus himself has passed through the veil, made atonement for our sins, and that by his death and resurrection has enabled us to approach God as our Father and petition him.
 - Our confidence is that Jesus himself is presently interceding for us.
 - Our confidence is that Jesus, from his exalted position at the right hand of the Father, is speaking for us. (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

- To pray in a manner consistent with the name of Jesus is to pray that all that is done in his name is for His glory alone and for his purposes.
 - To pray in his name means that our prayers conform to Christ's purposes.
 - And his purpose is for the Father to be glorified in the Son.
 - 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
 - To pray in the name of Jesus means we are praying in a manner consistent with his character, values, and purposes with the chief aim being the glorification of God alone.
 - When we pray this way we know that we are not asking anything that is outside of the will of God.
 - When we pray in his name we are indicating that his priorities and purposes are primary and central.
 - When we pray this way we can have confidence that our asking will be met with answered prayer that brings glory to God alone.
 - God honors prayers truly offered in Jesus's name.
- Praying in Jesus's name is a check against the many selfish prayers we make.
 - James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.
 - God is not obligated to answer prayers that are selfishly made or answer any requests ignorantly made that would prove disastrous if he answered them according to what we have asked.

IV. THE CONDITION FOR OUR ASKING

- Jesus's repeated invitations to ask for anything in his name in the upper room discourse included a very important condition.
 - John 15:7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
 - The condition is abiding.
 - Abide means to "continue, dwell, remain, or stay."
 - Abiding in Christ means being in communion with Him.
 - It is about a life-giving communion with Christ that produces His character in us and accomplishes his will in us.
 - Abiding means to be ever conscious of the presence of Christ and our union with Christ.
 - Charles Spurgeon, wrote, "We live in him, by him, for him, to him when we abide in him."
 - When we are in close communion with Christ, we become so closely aligned with his desires that they become our desires, so that when we pray, we are praying in the will of God.
- His words must also abide in us.
 - You will never pray out of the will of God when you are praying the word of God.
 - It is the word of God dwelling in you richly, that forms the content of your prayer such that your asking is in conformity to his character and will.
 - Our asking will then be met with answered prayer.
 - 1 John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.
 - You never have to worry about praying in the will of God when you are praying according to the Word of God.
 - Abiding in him and his words abiding in you will give you confidence in prayer.

- **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 abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
- Jesus states that there is a direct correlation between our receiving whatever we ask for in his name and our fruit-bearing.
- To bear fruit means to manifest ongoing faith and obedience to Christ leading to ever-increasing Christ-likeness.
- The fruit the Spirit produces in us is the character, attitude, and behavior of Christ (Gal. 5:22-23).
- 1 John 3:22 "And we receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him."
- The result of abiding in Christ as an obedient disciple, who lives to bring him glory and to please him, is powerful guidance and confidence in prayer.

V. THE GUARANTEE IN OUR ASKING

- Jesus adds his stamp of authority and guarantee when he invites us to pray in his name—he will do whatever we ask.
- Jesus guarantees the outcome of the prayer offered in his name. "I will do it."
- John 16:24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.
- John 16:26-27 In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.
- The disciples, who had been troubled at the news of Christ's impending departure, would have their grief turned to joy when they saw how the Father would answer their prayers offered in Jesus's name.
- That is the same for us, we will take delight in the Father's answer to our requests that conform to his will and are made with a desire for him to be glorified.
- Prayer can be frustrating when all of the requests we make are our own ideas of what God should do to accomplish our will.
- But there is real joy in knowing that our prayers made according to his will are being implemented in our lives and the Father is glorified in that.
- Let's purpose to become the praying people that Christ has appointed us to be.
- Let's offer every prayer in the name of Jesus with complete confidence because we know what his name represents, praying in a manner consistent with his character, praying with his priorities and purposes in mind, praying for him to be glorified in the answer to those requests.
- Prioritize daily, ongoing communion with Christ, abiding in him and his Word abiding in you.
- And we will see the fruit of that in lasting spiritual impact for the glory of God.
- How does he promise to answer each of those requests we make in Jesus's name?
- Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
- He is able to not only do what we ask or think, He is able to do FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY than we ask or think.
- That's how powerful and glorious our God is!
- Our asking is so small in comparison to God's ability to answer our prayers in mind-blowing ways that only he can do.

- So pray big, bold, audacious prayers because He can do FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY than you can even imagine.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?