

Four Amazing Passages About Prayer

- Intro 1) Of the 27 passages in the N.T. that deal with prayer - most of the teachings are from Jesus himself
- 2) We shall explore 3 passages from Jesus and 1 penned by Paul
- Jn 15:7 "Remain in me"
 - Mk 10:51 "What do you want?"
 - Mk 11:24 "Believe that you have received it"
 - Phil 4:7 "A peace that passes understanding will fill your heart"

I. Jn 15:7 READ carefully (Three aspects of this teaching)

Remaining; Asking; Receiving

A. "Remaining" - KJV - "abide in me"

1. To take up abode
2. Living in Christ
 - a. Do you believe God OR believe in God?
 - b. Do you believe the Word of God OR believe in it?
 - c. Living in Christ involves believing both God and His Word.

(READ Jn 15:7 again)
3. What does it mean - "If you abide in me and my words abide in you?"
 - a. Does it mean Memorizing the Bible?
 - b. Does it mean Quoting "book, chapter, & verse" at the drop of a hat?
 - c. It means - Letting His Word Tell You What to Do!!
4. When Christ's words are living in you - then you are obedient to what He says.
5. It means that you and God are on the same side!
 - a. This clue gives you a big WHY in this scripture.
 - b. It means that you are going to want what He wants.

And He will want what you want.

 - 1) Look at I Jn 5:14-15
 - 2) Jn 10:30 "I and my father are one."
 - 3) Jn 17:21 "As thou art in me, and I in thee; may they be one in us."

B. "Remaining" in Christ keeps you from "ASKING" for unimportant things.

1. We want (thus pray for) what His word says is important.
2. If our requests are for yachts and Rolex watches -

then here's a clue that God's word is not living us.
3. Being on the same side with Christ eliminates selfish prayers.
4. May we not ask for physical blessings?

Of course we may - Jesus said we should -
It is God's will that we have these things.

- C. We shall “Receive” what God wants us to have.
1. God does not want us to suffer any more that we want our children to suffer.
 2. But sometimes, being deprived is a great way to learn.
 3. And sometimes a child thinks he is suffering when he is NOT. (God’s view of suffering is often different from ours) Jn 11:1-7
 4. But - if we are letting God’s word literally tell us what to do - then what we want is going to be suitable.
 - a. And as a result - Jesus can say: “You will receive it.”
 - b. You see - the key is not only praying, but Living . . .
“Not my will but thine be done . . .”
 - c. That’s what “Remaining” in Jesus is
 - 1) That’s what letting His words Live in us IS
 - 2) It results in “Receiving” what we “Ask” -
because we are in tune with God’s will.

II. Mark 10:51

- A. Background:
1. Jesus is in a Big Hurry - vs 46
 2. Great crowds accompanied Him (gallery at International Tourney)
 3. A beggar may be heard hollering in the background
 - a. How do you feel about beggars? Right - everyone else too
 - b. People tried to quiet him down - vs 48
 - c. They are ashamed of the local nuisance.
 4. Jesus stopped (stopped in his tracks) vs 49
 5. The man asked for mercy - vs. 48 (you don’t want justice!)
 6. Jesus was not intimidated by the crowd
 7. Jesus said, “Bring that man to me” - vs 49
(Why not say, “Come here”? Jesus knew he was blind)
- B. Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?”
1. I think I would have known what he wanted!
 - a. And Jesus knew the hearts of all men
 - b. Yet he asked, “What do you want?”
 - c. “Master - I want to see.”
 - d. Why did Jesus ask?
 2. By making the man define it, it brought reality to his request.
- C. What do you want from Jesus? Do you know?
1. What do we often pray? “Oh Father . . .
 - a. . . help me; be with me; help me do good;
 - b. . . help me be a good Dad; a good Christian;
 - c. . . give me mercy; give me relief; give me strength.
 2. Sounds a little vague doesn’t it?
 - a. Kind of like “Vain repetitions”?
 - b. Sometimes I council married people who are not happy.

- 1) They want their spouse to make them happy.
 - 2) I say, “What do you want?”
 - 3) How can your spouse be what you want - if you don’t even know what you want?
3. When you pray - “Dear God - Help Me” -
 - a. You can never wake up one day and say, “He did it - thanks!”
 - b. If you are not specific, you can’t recognize the answer when you get it!
 - c. Don’t just ask, “Give me a good life”. That’s too vague. Ask specifically, step by step.
 4. Jesus asked “What do you want?”
 - a. He forced the man to be concise.
 - b. And being concise forces us to be specific
 - c. And being specific allows us to recognize the answer.
 - 1) “Today - help me NOT to use profanity”.
 - 2) “Today - help me be complimentary to my wife.”
 - 3) “Connect me with a person I can help.”
 - 4) “Show me a person searching for you.”
 - d. These requests are measurable!
 - 1) Being specific helps us see the answers.
 - 2) And - the answer will come.
- D. Being specific makes you analyze what you really want.
1. Sometimes, we don’t stop to consider what must accompany the answer to our prayers.
 - a. “Lord, help my children become strong Christians.”
 - 1) That might involve a trip to the pig pen
 - 2) (Before they realize that the Father’s house is better).
 - b. “Lord, help my children to love you.”
 - 1) This will mean that they will have to Give Up.”
 - 2) Might mean we have to also (no one wants to sacrifice)
 2. Being specific makes us define the difference between a wish and a want.
 - a. I wish I could lose 15 pounds.
 - b. But I Don’t Want to Eat Right and Exercise
 3. We wish we were Better Christians -
 - a. But do we want it?
 - b. If we do - then:
 - 1) We will be specific about what’s wrong.
 - 2) We will persist in prayer about it.
 - a) This is called wrestling in prayer.

- b) When we too quickly - too easily - give up in prayer - Is this a sign we don't really want it?
- c) Then we wonder why God doesn't answer prayer:

We Don't Know What We Want!

- 4. I wish I could sing like _____.

 - a. "Dear Lord - help me sing like _____.
 - b. But - I don't want to have to take lessons.
 - c. I don't want to have to work.
 - d. Do you see the difference between a wish and a want?

- 5. What do you want Jesus Christ to do for you?
Could you tell Him if He asked you right now?

III. Mark 11:24 (Please be turning to this text)

- A. This scripture contains a mind-boggling promise.
 - 1. I refused to think about this verse for years.
 - 2. It was too amazing to believe.
 - a. Sometimes it scares me to think that God has given me:
 - 1) the wife - I always wanted
 - 2) the home - I always wanted
 - 3) the health - I always wanted
 - 4) the children - I always wanted
 - 5) the job - I always wanted
 - b. It is just too wonderful for me! It scares me.
 - 3. That is the way this scripture is . . .
- B. READ vs 20-24 (WOW!!!)
 - 1. See vs 23 - "I tell you the truth"
 - 2. This must be symbolical (There is a lot of symbolism in the Bible you know . . .)
 - a. This promise was made to the disciples . . .
 - b. Paul was a disciple -
 - 1) Yet - the thorn didn't go away when he asked
He asked 3 times ("My grace is sufficient")
 - 2) He prayed and prayed to get out of prison -
but he finally realized that Paradise might
just be the alternate destination.
 - c. How do we fit this stuff together?
(Jesus Himself prayed 3 times, "Let this cup pass . . .")
 - 3. How do we apply this principle in our lives?
- C. Look at vs 22 - "Have Faith in God".
 - 1. For this promise to be true ("believe you have received - granted"),
God must be real to you (that is the "Faith" Jesus
mentioned)
 - 2. We think of Abraham when we think of Faith.

- a. God promised - Leave home - to land - I'll make great nation
- b. Problem - Abraham had no son
- c. He went to the land. He lived there for years
 - 1) His wife became older and older - past child bearing years
 - 2) He became older and older - prospects bleaker & bleaker
- d. Finally - Sarah suggested the handmaiden
 - 1) He had that son - but it was not the son of promise.
 - 2) God promised that Sarah would bear the son.
 - 3) Abraham sent the first son away.
- e. And - in his old age - Isaac is finally born.
 - 1) So - what does God say to do?
 - 2) Take him to a mountain and SACRIFICE HIM
 - a) You don't just kill him
 - b) You burn him up! (That's a bleak prospect, isn't it?)
- f. But look what Abraham says to his servants:

"You wait here, my son and I will go and worship -
And WE will Return".

Heb 11:17 & 19 "he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son . . . he considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type."
- g. Abraham BELIEVED GOD.
And God's promise demanded a living Isaac
He was prepared to Burn Isaac Up -
And yet - return with him alive!
- h. Jesus said - "Have faith in God".

D. We must learn to put our faith in the Ask-ee -- not the Asked for!

1. Abraham didn't know Why and he didn't know How - but he knew Who!!
2. Our attention needs to shift:

From: the thing asked for
To: the one asked

Eph 3:20 "God is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all we ask or think."

 - a. Abraham was praying, "Bring him back to life".
 - b. God did not do it as Abraham asked. Why?
 - c. He didn't have to - His purpose ... accomplished another way
 - 1) What was His purpose?
 - 2) To demonstrate Abraham's faith

(now God knows - Abraham knows - We know)

3. Shall we curse God when He answers our prayers and fulfills His purposes in another way . . . beyond what we think or ask?
 4. In Eph 3:20 - Paul is saying - "Put faith in the Ask-ee - not the Asked For".
- E. Look what Jesus said, ". . . ask - believing that you have received it..."
1. The instant I ask of God that which is according to His will - I believe He sets the wheels in motion.
Now . . .
 - a. He may roll down something beyond what I asked.
 - b. And/or - it may take a long, long time for me to see it.
(how long did Abraham wait for Isaac?)
(how long did Israelites wait in Egyptian bondage?)
 - c. But I believe this:
 - 1) His answer will be good for me (one way or another)
 - 2) His answer will accomplish His purposes
(which is what I want if I am remaining in Christ)
 2. And - IF that answer is NOT in my lifetime - I will die believing that my death may be a part of bringing about the answer to my prayer.
- F. The prayer of faith is prayed by a heart that is full of God.
1. It is believing that you have received it
 2. Then living as though it will happen.

IV. Philippians 4:7 The Prayer of Trust

- A. READ Phil 4:6-7
1. Many times we cannot know God's will in a situation.
 2. So . . . when we ask a certain thing, we TRUST that God will do what's right.
- B. The Prayer of Trust is NOT:
1. A Feeble Faith - "Whatever . . ."
 2. A Lazy Faith - "I don't want to search the scriptures to find God's will."
- C. Rather - it Believes that God has my best interest at heart
(and we must never doubt that!) (we must pray . . .)
1. "God - you love my children more than I do . . ."
 2. "God - you love my husband/wife more than I do . . ."
 3. So . . . when I don't understand why things happen -

I still know that always, always and forever you're doing what's best for them."

- D. The Prayer of Trust ALWAYS includes Thanksgiving.
1. "Be anxious for nothing - but in everything by prayer and supplication, WITH THANKSGIVING, let your requests be made known to God."
 2. I can thank Him for what He has done in the past.
 3. I can thank Him that my request is already being processed.
 4. Without Thanksgiving - You CANNOT pray the Prayer of Trust
Psalm 13:1-6 (contrast vss 1-4 with 5-6)

Concl

What have we seen in these lessons?

- 1) We have discussed the Power of Prayer:
 - a) The power of Praise
 - b) The power of Confession
 - c) The power of Supplication
 - d) The power of Thanksgiving
 - e) The power of Intercession
 - f) The power of PersistenceAND . . .
- 2) We have learned these truths about Prayer:
 - a) If we - "Remain in Christ" - (make His will our own)
 - b) And, if we - "Ask specifically what it is we want"
 - c) And, if we - "Believe that we have received it"
(or something exceedingly better!)
 - d) Then - "A peace that passes understanding will guard our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus."

All that is left is to put this into practice in:

"My Life of Prayer"