



ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE PART I

Prayer Recap: 4 Truths

- We pray to a God who is...
 - _____, not aloof.
 - _____, not reluctant.
- Petitioning God...
 - Shapes _____.
 - Shapes the _____.

The Shape of Biblical Petition...

- Ask _____. (Mt. 26:39)
 - Pray for the *means* not just the end.
- Ask for God's _____ to be done. (Mt. 6:10, 26:39)
 - Express your personal will. Trust God's sovereign will.
- Ask _____ and again. (Lk. 18:1-8; Isa. 62:6-7)
 - When it comes to constantly asking God for his help and provision, you need to be "that guy".
- Wait and _____. (Ps. 5:3)
 - Are we guilty of having low expectations for God?

Spiritual work is taxing work, and men are loath to do it. Praying, true praying, costs an outlay of serious attention and of time, which flesh and blood do not relish.

—E.M. Bounds



ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE PART I

Prayer Recap: 4 Truths

- We pray to a God who is...
 - Attentive, not aloof.
 - Generous, not reluctant.
- Petitioning God...
 - Shapes us.
 - Shapes the world.

The Shape of Biblical Petition...

- Ask specifically. (Mt. 26:39)
 - Pray for the *means* not just the end.
- Ask for God's will to be done. (Mt. 6:10, 26:39)
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ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE PART 1

Prayer Recap: 4 Truths

Great dance worship service yesterday. Got to pray for the girls at 5—what the Bible calls petition. We've talked about different kinds of prayer. And today we're talking about asking or requesting. Remember we don't start here but we finish here. **PRAY!**

We pray to a God who is...

- Attentive, not aloof.

It's important that when we talk about praying we're not talking about saying a prayer but conversing with a person. If you're new to prayer... Prayer is not saying words in God's direction. It's not leaving a message that God will check and get back to us later. We believe that 2000 years ago a man named Jesus of Nazareth lived, died and rose again so that you we can actually talk to God. Like have conversation and hold communion with the God of the universe. And not only can we talk to God, what's just as amazing is that he actually listens to every word. Your spouse doesn't even do that! We said that because God is infinitely powerful, and his cognitive capacities are limitless, God is not distracted. If every single person in the world prayed at the same time, you would receive every bit as much of God's attention as you would if you were the only one praying. I think you really need to know that God is listening!

- Generous, not reluctant.

Now it's interesting that for whatever reason we think God is all wise, all powerful, infinitely resourced, but is somehow stingy in his willingness to let us share in his fortune. Gates—89 billion dollars—on inheritance. "It will be a minuscule portion of my wealth. It will mean they have to find their own way....It's not a favor to kids to have them have huge sums of wealth...it distorts anything they might do." Fair enough with kids. But don't we tend to think of God this way some times. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are 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!" (Mt. 7:7-11) Like do we think of God like that? Think of the most generous person you know...the most giving, the most kind, the most willing to help. God is incalculably more generous than that person. "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32) Next time when you are tempted to think or feel that God is stingy or reluctant, remember what he gave—or Who—he gave in order to make the conversation you're currently having with him possible. Our God is generous!

Annie J. Flint He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day is half done, When we reach the end of our hoarded resources; Our Father's full giving is only begun.

His love has no limits, His grace has no measure, His power no boundary known unto men; For out of His infinite riches in Jesus He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

- Petitioning God...

- Shapes us.

(Mt 6:7-8) “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” Why? My waiter sees my glass low and fill sit up without me having to ask. Why with God? So that our neediness is constantly impressed upon us! World’s strength is independence. Biblical strength is growing in dependence on God—which by the way looks like weakness to the world. Our culture says, “you can” a believer says, “I can’t, but you can and that’s why I’m coming to you. “God often waits to give a blessing until you have prayed for it. Why? Good things that we do not ask for will usually be interpreted by our hearts as the fruit of our own wisdom and diligence... [which] thickens the illusion of self.” (Keller) We ask for daily bread. We’re begging for bread. We don’t like people who always have their hand out. We don’t want to be that guy. But as long as you’re a sinner, that the only way for you to approach God is with your handout with the realization that when it comes to God—and you will always be that guy. And as we constantly plead with God for help, it destroys our the illusions of self-sufficiency and help us feel how needy and desperate for God we really are!

- Shapes the world.

We’re not just praying therapeutically. We’re praying effectively. Prayer is one of the primary means that God uses to accomplish his plans in the world. “Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Mt. 9:38) God has not designed to send laborers into the harvest by themselves but through the prayers of his people!

“What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use -- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men -- men of prayer.” (E.M. Bounds) O God help us be men and women of prayer! Help us wield prayer not as a benefits program but a weapon against the enemy... “...and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.” Make no mistake about it friends, prayer is warfare. We’re setting up our own war room this week. May look like dim lights and soft music. Don’t be deceived—this is war. Christians go to war on their knees. This week will help to shape the world. And I hope that you’ll come to battle.

The Shape of Biblical Petition...

- Ask specifically. (Mt. 26:39)

Asking specifically has kind of gotten a bad rap, because some people say that asking for what you want is selfish and that Jesus only tells his disciples to pray, “Thy Will be done”. The problem with that is that’s not what Jesus did. Jesus had no problem making very specific requests, most notably in Mt. 26:39, And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” Jesus is making a very specific request here. Essentially, he’s asking, “Can we change the plan now?” God wants you to come to him and ask for the specific things. Gen. 18 50, 45, 30, 20 10. Ezekiel 4...

So we ask specifically and part of asking specifically means asking for the means not just the end. Pray for the *means* not just the end.

Many of us tend to be lazy in our requests. Don't ask God to help your neighbor hear the Gospel, but for you to share with them. Getting in shape! Increase in holiness.

- Ask for God's will to be done. (Mt. 6:10, 26:39) (Saved other blank for next week)
 - Express your personal will. Trust God's sovereign will.

So Jesus' prayer starts with "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" but it ends with, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

If I stood in a room and asked people, "Raise your hands if you wish God would always answer every prayer you prayed" most hands would go up. Because they believe the lie that they always know what's best for them. We don't even have to read the Bible to know that. Would you pray if God promised to give you everything you asked for? If so, you have vastly overestimated your ability to guide yourself. We don't know what we want and we often don't want what's best for ourselves. 1st Career path I was going to choose and second! Girl I thought I would marry. So we ask specifically, yes, but we plead that God's will be done precisely so that we don't get everything we ask for! Saying Thy will be done is saying "if there's a better option do that" and thankfully he does. One author said, "Sometimes we ask God for a bar of silver and he gives us a bar of gold with "No" written on it." So we pray specifically for our will and we trusts in God's superior sovereign will.

- Ask again and again. (Lk. 18:1-8; Isa. 62:6-7)

"39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." 40 And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." 43 And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again." Jesus is pleading with God—just in case you didn't hear me, I'm going to say it again. This is a pattern for us. Like God is not exasperated when his children ask for the same thing over and over again. This is not like asking "Are we there yet?" It's an expression of our need for God. Our staff personally prays for cards marked confidential. I'm reminded of a brother who we've prayed for week after week and he got a job this week. God has designed to answer some prayers after they are offered for the 500th time. "On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth." (Isa. 62:6-7). Keep praying for those struggling! Our church! Give God no rest until he establishes them!

- Wait and watch. (Ps. 5:3)
 - Are we guilty of having low expectations for God?"In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly."

Youth group. Preview for next week.

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