

Petitionary Prayer

CH Spurgeon- Whether we like it or not, asking is the rule of the Kingdom

-Why does the mighty Creator answer prayer? Because we ask.

Intro: Prayer is essential to our relationship with the Father

A. When our asking is for ourselves it's called petition

1. We must never reject or demean this level of prayer

a. Do not buy the lie that only immature people pray the petitionary prayer

b. Petitionary prayer is primary in our relationship with God, because we are forever dependent upon Him

2. It is something that we never really get beyond-- who would want to?

3. The Bible is filled with petitionary prayer

B. Jesus taught us to pray (the Lord's prayer)

1. He urged his disciples to ask (**Matt. 7:7-8**)

a. Yet many times our prayers seem immature and self absorbed

b. On one hand it would seem better to stay with adoration and contemplation

-They feel more elevated

-And, we would not have to deal with unanswered prayer...

2. But Jesus keeps drawing us into the most basic relationship of child and parent (asking and receiving)

3. None of us would give our children a stone, if they asked for bread... (**Matt. 7:9-11**)

"Petition is not a lower form of prayer, it is our staple diet"

I. Two common problems

A. Why ask God if He already knows what we're going to ask Him? (**Matt. 6:5-8**)

1. Well... God likes to be asked

2. We're the same with our children because the asking deepens our relationship

3. God loves to be asked for what He longs to give

B. I shouldn't bother God with the little insignificant details of my life (The world has greater issues of importance)

1. In one sense, nothing is more important to Him than the anxiety we experience over tomorrow's surgery, or a struggling child, etc...

2. These are matters of great importance to Him, because they are matters of great importance to us

a. It is a false humility to stand back and not share our deepest needs

b. God wants us to share the smallest parts of our lives with Him in the same way we want our children to share their lives with us

II. The perplexity of Unanswered Prayer

A. This is the most troubling issue of petitionary prayer (Unanswered prayer)

1. The easy answer is “yes, no or not now”
2. If we’re honest and not trying to cover up our own insecurity, we must admit that we’re perplexed sometimes
-Brownsville TN. (Car accident)

C.S. Lewis- “Every war, every famine or plague, almost every death-bed, is a monument to a petition that was not granted”

3. It’s even more perplexing when we consider the lavish promise of the NT- Look at Jesus’ words in **Mark 11:24**

- a. These real problems are difficult to understand
- b. So we stand under the mysteries of the will of God... **1 Cor. 13:12**
- c. But I’m convinced (in faith) that we will someday in heaven come to know “that God’s greatest refusals were sometimes the true answers to our truest prayer”

B. Another reality is-- our prayers are indeed answered- But sometimes we lack the eyes to see it.

1. Our prayers must also ask God to increase our discernment, so we can see things as God see them

C. One other reality is that sin hinders our prayers (I do not mean to say that God does not hear a sinners prayer-- for then who would God hear??)

1. Instead I mean **James 4:3** and **1 Pet. 4:7** (sometimes our motives are wrong)
2. This certainly does not clear up the perplexities of unanswered prayers
3. But don’t forget Jesus-- in His moment of greatest agony, shared our confused question: “Why?”

Conclusion: Jesus gave us this prayer-- Matthew 6:9-14

3 personal petitions-

1. Give (the daily essentials of our lives-- big and small)
2. Forgive
 - a. This has a lot to do with how I treat you and those in the world
 - b. It’s also conditional
3. Deliver
 - a. To deliver us from Satan
 - b. Lead us not in temptation-- A better expression: May our faith stand firm in the time of trial. Because a time of trial could come at any time, which will show whether we are truly his followers

Cambridge Professor- Herbert Farmer: If prayer is the heart of religion [Christianity-my emphasis], then petition is the heart of prayer”

Psalm 61:1-2

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