

BIBLICAL PRAYER (70)

Theological Reality #2 - When prayer is addressed to God the Father it must be specifically offered through God the Son.

Time and time again we learn that prayer must be offered to God the Father through the name of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ Himself taught this:

(Passage #1) - John 14:13 - Prayer is directed to the Father in Jesus name and must be that which glorifies the Father.

(Passage #2) - John 15:16 - Prayer directed to the Father is made in Jesus' name and fruit-bearing answers to prayer come from the Father. Every believer has a right to pray to God the Father through the name of Jesus Christ asking to bear fruit and expecting answers.

(Passage #3) - John 16:23 - Answers from the Father are clearly related to prayer made in Jesus' name, especially for full joy in the context of trouble (**16:24-33**).

Dr. Charles Feinberg wrote: "Christ taught that acceptable and effective prayer should be in His name" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, 96:285-306, pp. 293, 1939).

One question that immediately comes to mind is, "What exactly does it mean to pray in Jesus name?" Since this is such a critical part of the inspired formula for having the Father answer the prayer, what exactly does it mean?

When Jesus would have said this to His disciples, they would have immediately thought of three names, "Lord Jesus Christ." In thinking about the name "Lord" they would understand He was eternal God. In thinking about the name "Jesus" they would understand Him to be the Savior, and in thinking about the name "Christ" they would think of Him as Israel's Messiah. Prayer "in Jesus name" would be "based first on His office as Savior" (John Walvoord, *Prayer in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, Bib. Sac., pp. 465, 1934).

Most of Christianity assumes to pray in the name of Jesus simply means to end a prayer with words which say something like "We pray all these things or we ask all these things in Jesus' name, Amen." Some at the end of a prayer will change the tone of their voice to emphasize "in Jesus' name." Is this what it means to pray in Jesus' name? As long as we conclude our prayers with this prepositional phrase, does this guarantee that God the Father will give us a successful and positive answer?

Before we examine this important concept, let me say that this prepositional phrase "in Jesus' name" is critical. It is only through the name of Jesus Christ that we can even begin to approach the throne of God, so we certainly never want to minimize its importance, but we also want to understand what this means.

BIBLICAL PRAYER (71)

The critical point to realize is that any connection or relationship that human beings have with God the Father must come through God the Son. Jesus Christ made this point very clear in **John 14:6**. In the original text the verse is emphatic; Jesus Christ is stressing that He is “the” way, “the” truth and “the” life. We could understand this to be the only way, the only truth and the only life. Jesus Christ is the only possibility of sinful men having a relationship with the Father. **Everything must go through Him in regard to the Father, including prayer . Any connection we have with God the Father must always be through God the Son.** Dr. Walvoord said, “The basis of our prayer life ... is our union with Christ” (*Ibid.*, p. 466).

In a true understanding of what it means to pray in Jesus’ name, the spiritually-minded believer realizes that access to the Father is contingent upon everything Christ is and upon everything Christ accomplished. **A name is that which represents the Person .** A name is a title that reflects who the Person is. The name Jesus Christ is a title that stands for the second member of the Trinity who came to this earth. Praying “in the name of Jesus” is praying with a full acknowledgement of who Christ is and all He accomplished.

Again we cite Charles Feinberg: “To pray in the name of Christ means to invoke all of His authority and power. It includes all that Christ is and has done or ever will do. ... To invoke the name of Christ is to avail one’s self of all that He is in His essential character. Whatever God will do for Christ because of who He is, God will do for us when we ask in Christ’s name. When we pray in Christ’s name, furthermore, we must be certain that we have His mind and are in sympathy with His purposes and plans. To ask in Christ’s name for our own selfish pursuits and personal interests is to commit forgery. ... To pray in Christ’s name is not to use His name as a charm or talisman simply, as though the bare repetition of it were all that is required to open the treasures of infinite grace. The name of Christ stands for Christ Himself. And to pray in the name of Christ is to pray in Christ, in the mind and spirit and will of Christ. Finally, we pray in the name of Christ when we are in intimate and vital union with Him. Christ has declared: “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (*Ibid.*, pp. 295-296)

Praying in the name of Jesus is not just verbally concluding the prayer with the words “in Jesus name.” It is praying to God the Father with a true and living perspective of who Christ is in our relationship with God the Father and it is praying with a true perspective of Christ’s word and will. Obviously, the more we know and obey God’s Word, concerning the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the more accurately and intelligently we are able to pray. Every time we bow our heads in prayer, we should both spiritually and verbally acknowledge that access to the Father and the ability to bring requests to Him is solely based on Jesus Christ. Praying in Jesus’ name is not just repeating words; it is repeating words with a heart and mind that recognizes the Word and will of God as it pertains to the Person and work of Jesus Christ.