**Asking In Jesus' Name.**

**Does It Work?**

**John 16.23 30**

**Rogate – Easter 6 – 05.14.2023**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

“God doesn’t answer my prayer,” so the complaint goes. Or maybe, “God doesn’t hear my prayer.” Some may even commiserate, “God doesn’t care about me,” Or, “I must have really made God angry.” Why? “Because God hasn’t done what I asked Him to do.”

You may at one time have had a similar issue with God, thinking God had not taken care of the project you had given Him.

There is a reason for that! It happens because people think they know the words of Jesus in our text. *Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

From that, people conclude, “OK, whatever I ask for, if I ask it in the name of Jesus, He will do it.” That’s why so many people tack an ***“in Jesus name”*** at the end of their prayer. Some think that phrase is like a magical formula, if added to their prayer, it will get their prayers answered – ***IN THE MANNER THEY WANT IT ANSWERED!!!***

Some false teachers, those claiming to teach in the name of Christ, proclaim that you will receive ***WHATEVER*** you request if you pray hard enough “in Jesus’ name.”

It is true Jesus promises that *whatever we ask of the Father in His name, the Father will give it to you.* First, we should determine what it means to pray in the name of Jesus. Of this you can be certain, it does ***NOT*** mean that you are to tack some sort of phrase like, “all this we ask in the name of Jesus” at the end of your prayer.

What is Jesus’ name? His name is God’s name. His name is “I AM.” He is very God of very God. His name shall be called: Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” (Is. 9:6) Mary and Joseph named Him Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. They were told that He would be called – and indeed He would be – Holy! (Mt. 1:21, Lk 1:31, 35) His name is holy – for He is holy. And, at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth! (Phil. 2:10, Rom. 14:11)

Our prayers need to be prayed in the name of Jesus. Our prayers need to be prayed in holiness and righteousness. This is not about spiritual -vs- temporal and worldly benefits. This is not that God only cares about spiritual things. He cares about us in this body and life as well, Jesus instructs us to pray for our daily bread, the things we need to live now.

Prayers in Jesus’ name are based upon knowing and trusting that Jesus is God!

Prayer in Jesus name comes from an understanding and confession of our own sinfulness and unworthiness before God!

Prayer in Jesus names flows from faith and trust in the redemptive work of Him as our Savior – His holiness and perfection sacrificed upon the cross to redeem us from our unholiness and sinfulness, granting us forgiveness;

Prayer in Jesus name flows from the promise of God that we bear the name of Jesus. We are baptized into His name – truly, we are baptized into Christ – whatever is Christ’s is ours.

Consider motherhood!

When a mother makes a promise, you can count on it. Co-workers, friends, even fathers, husbands, and wives may break promises. If a mother says, “I'll give you whatever you want,” no matter what, you can be confident that she will do all that is possible within her ability to deliver what her child desires.

I believe this is true because of the close bond between mother and child. This bond develops even before the child is born. Mother and child share the same blood, live from the same food, survive on the same air. For nine months, mother and child are practically one. When the child is finally born, no one can say that it's not her child, for it came forth from her flesh. A father can attempt to say, “I'm not your father!” They may share physical traits, but only a paternity test can prove the truth or not. A mother can never do that.

This intimate flesh and blood bond encourages a mother to promise nearly anything for her child. This same, flesh and blood bond causes the child to believe that mother will do anything for them. This is true because of that intimate bond children share with their mother – even closer than the bond children share with their father.

There is however a closer relationship. Jesus stated, *Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

What makes this promise so trustworthy, sure, and certain, is the incredibly intimate bond between Christ and the Christian. He abides ***in*** you and you abide ***in*** Him. You and Jesus both share the same blood; His blood which He poured out generously for your benefit on the cross.

You and Jesus both live from the same life; His life which He sacrificed to restore, renew, invigorate, and revitalize your entire being.

You and Christ both survive on the same breath – His breath, His Spirit, by which you live and move and have your being.

If you open your eyes and look around at Twenty-first century society, the erosion of that bond between child and mother is plainly visible. We see mothers who have aborted children in the womb. Other mothers have killed or abandoned their children shortly after birth. Why? They deny the bond – they claim the child would be an inconvenience to their life, their dreams, their goals, their aspirations.

Christ's promise is more sure than the promise of any earthly mother, for He will never abandon or forsake us. FOR you is His life – You are His dream – You are His goal – You are His aspiration.

Christ’s promise gives birth to faith which trusts Jesus at His Word;

faith confident that Christ will never let you down;

faith which does not question the answer nor the gifts which He gives;

faith which honors our Lord by asking anything in His name;

faith which is fed and lives on the promise ***AND*** the Lord Jesus who makes it.

Prayer in the name of Jesus never makes demands nor lays down conditions. It never says, “God if you take care of this, I will do... that.”

It is not prayer in Jesus’ name when someone prays only in the hour of crisis, asking for a perceived miracle – but who does not intend to live their ***WHOLE*** life in faith to Jesus from whom the answer is spoken, the Word given, or the life received.

Unfortunately, too often that is the kind of asking which even you and I do when our sinful nature gets the best of us.

True prayer is only asking that which flows from faith. Remember our Lenten meditation on the words, “Our Father?” This intimate union between Christ and Christian makes all the difference. Only the prayer of those united to Christ is graciously heard; the promise kept; and the answer lovingly given. For only in Christ is the request met, ***bettered***, ***made good and beneficial***, for only in Christ, is there love which flows from the Father.

It is this loving relationship that is given to us – a relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – where faith is given, and in where faith gratefully receives and takes to heart that love. It is this gifted faith which loves Jesus and believes that He came forth from God. It is in this relationship that your prayer is answered and your Lord comes through for you. As you are in Christ, the Father Himself loves you. In this relationship with Christ, you pray in Jesus’ name.

The Father's love for you is not based on how well you obey Him. It is not given to you because of how much you serve Him, or even how often and how earnestly you pray to Him. The Father loves you because of the love of Christ – and that Christ Himself lives and abides in you.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this relationship to God began with your baptism. God united you to Christ, calls you His own, gave you His name, and promises to be with you always – even to the end of the age. God's love for you unites you to Christ, and he is faithful to keep you in that faith He began in you.

You live your life in your baptism, daily confessing your sinfulness and trusting in Christ’s forgiveness. This is living your daily life in Christ – remembering that He has called you by name and made you His own dear child. Continuing in your baptismal grace, Christ's love abides within you.

In the love of Christ, you love the Father. In the love of Christ, your bond and union is not only with Jesus, but also with His Father. In Christ you share and participate and partake in God. Whatever the Father has, you are given by virtue of the Son who gave His life for you, and plants His Body and Blood within you.

Prayer in Jesus’ name is not about specific words tacked onto the end of your prayer.

Prayer in Jesus’ name ***IS*** the prayer of the one united to Christ in faith.

You, dear Christians, are in Christ – you, dear Christian, pray in Jesus name. Ask, that your joy may be full. Your confidence that your prayer will be answered, rests on the same Jesus who lives and abides in you. Thus, Jesus assures you that whatever you ask in His name, the Father will give you.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.