

If you do not struggle with prayer, you are dismissed now with my blessing. For those of you who stayed, we have our Lord's command to pray, we have the examples, models for prayer, even the book of Psalms, we have His promises He will give because we pray. So why do you and I struggle so much?

Our lives are full, too busy with more important items. Don't think prayer matters with fatalist or apathy view? Or frustrated with God, we pray He remove our issues and we still have issues. He doesn't seem to either care or take the actions you think is best. Repent. Do not be so foolish.

That's a problem I have with you people. Do you realize the privilege, opportunity you've been given? **Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.** It begs the question, what are we to ask for, that our joy may be full. Forgiveness, eternal life with Him and our loved ones, to be joined to His resurrected life, as He institutes the Lord's Supper that very night.

Even more He gives and acts, and we so foolishly don't realize prayer does change things, according to His good and gracious will, for what's best for you. Things have changed in your life because you had a mother praying for you, or a friend, because our Lord answers prayers. So often His ways and answers are hidden, beyond our reasoning, not in our timeframe, but we do not live by sight or results or successes or failures.

Consider parents put food on the table even though children neither deserve it or ask for it or have worked for it. It's still provided. Yet even more your Father's actions to provide for you, how can you show Him so little thanksgiving or not trust Him to provide? Parents will yield their plans, take different actions, be moved to act at certain requests of their children. Yet even more your Father's moved to act in divine wisdom because it's asked of Him. Parents care of so many things children never see, children do not understand, cannot grasp how parents answers it will pay off or benefit them even decades from now. Yet even more your Father addressing all things in your life for your good. In ways you cannot even imagine or see how things will work out for you and those you love.

And are there any of you who do not yearn to hear the voice of your loved one? How much more, your voice, commands the attention of the Creator of the universe. He delights to hear you.

Ask and you receive. What does it take for you to be content? Beware of fixing your eyes on worldly things and pleasures. We're so like the children of Israel in today's reading. After deliverance from bondage and death; all miracles, the Passover, Red Sea crossing. After the works of God to save them, destroy their enemies, protect them, keep them -they're impatient, they complain, do not trust; what God gives isn't good enough. Can you hear yourself in them. Learn from that as we hear Jesus' words urging us to pray. Prayer begins with humble, penitent heart. **We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord.**

They, we turn to Him lifted up for us on the cross, the curse removed, we are saved. So Christ invites us to pray to the Father **in His name**, He invites us to pray not based upon our own merits but upon His redeeming work, His cross.

Look at the example of King Solomon. He's overwhelmed, burdened. God told him to pray for whatever he wanted, it's his. What does he pray for? No riches or power or long-life or the death of his enemies. He prays for a discerning heart of wisdom that he could love God and serve God's people well. Learn from that as we hear Jesus' words urging us to pray.

Pray that our selfish heart be taken away, that you may be kept unsoiled from the world's pollutions, temptations and evils; that you may love your neighbor. And then ask for the godly desires of your heart. Whatever it is. You will receive it or even far greater than you imagine. It is yours. He may give it to you now, you may have to be patient -as when parents say to wait, so He teaches you more of His love or you may have to wait until heaven, but **ask and you will receive**; according to His gracious will, He will give it to you.

There is not more comforting words to you in your days than this; **I have said these things to you that in Me**, (again this is the night Jesus joins Himself to you in the Supper), **that in Me, you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but take heart, I have overcome the world.**

The Lord knows your tribulations very well. When you endure, your struggles with sin, with family, all of it. The troubles of this life are an invitation from God to pray, to call upon Him in our need. In this way the very things that plague and afflict us bring us nearer to our Lord, driving us to look where true joy may be found –in Christ's victory over the world, over death, your sin, over your tribulations, over anything that can truly harm you. **In Me you have peace, take heart, I have overcome the world.** These are not empty words. Oh how we need this in the midst of crazy, lawless, evil, unpatriotic, godless times we live. Jesus speaks this into your life. He promises in your prayers that He has your cause, He's committed to you.

Luther would quip, if the next day was full, knew it'd be challenging, more to get done that could be done, he would wake up an hour earlier. Wake up an hour earlier to read more Scripture, more time to pray. We need to think like that, or as St. James told you today, do it. **Be doers.** Live out the resurrected life that's given you. Jesus lives. If God is for us who can be against us? We are optimistic about the future, not because we don't expect tribulation and sorrow but because we know what God has promised. Trust Him. Be bold in the midst of difficulty and unafraid of the world and the media or the opinions of others. Be content and rejoice. Your prayers matter. He will act. You have His word on it. Lord teach us, help us to pray. It's yours when He promises, **In Me you have peace, take heart, I have overcome the world.**