Wilderness/Promise #12 Pastor Rick Baker

January 23 2022

*Out of the wilderness of heavenly silence and into*

**The Promise of Answered Prayer**

John 14:12-15

*How likely are you to experience answered prayer? Have you been disappointed a lot?*

Of the majority disciplines that engage Christians, perhaps there is no other as grossly misrepresented, over-exaggerated in scope, or under-valued, as prayer. The quest for the miraculous and mysterious nature of prayer is mostly exercises in totally missing the point. There is NO power in prayer—non-Christian religious and irreligious alike pray, to no avail. ***But if we understand what Jesus has actually said and promised in prayer, and practice the promise He made, it will revolutionize our lives.***

Those who grossly misrepresent prayer, misunderstand what has actually been promised, and what prayers actually catch Jesus’ attention. The sad fruit of misunderstanding results in people either insecure in their faith, or who mostly give up on prayer altogether—**because they didn’t get what they prayed for**!

Lots of books on prayer—among my favourites is “Reaching God’s Ear” Samuel Storms

To counter disappointment, we’ve been salved by “God always answers your prayers—yes, no, wait” (not sure that’s really true—Jesus has told us what prayers get answered...

John 14:12-15

What have we actually been promised about answered prayer?

Context🡪 the pending exaltation of Christ to heaven from earth, but the expectation that the work of Christ will continue through believers. “I am going to the Father” (14:1-4,12)🡪 3 promises are expected to be realized in the church to continue Christ’s mission: 1) greater works by ungreat people (14:12), 2) **answered prayer** (14:13-14), 3) [through] the indwelling Holy Spirit (14:16-17)

 “*Fruitful conduct is to be a product of their prayers.” (Carson, The Gospel According to John)*

Promise🡪 “You may ask me for **anything** in my name and I will do it.” (14:14) – *Please have someone send me a cheque to pay off my mortgage IN JESUS’ NAME amen!*

*What does “anything” mean?*

The theological truth sandwich on “anything” and answered prayer – (14: 12/13, 15)...

1. “...anyone who has faith in me...” (12; cf. Mk. 11:24)

Promise is for believers only.

1. “...in my name...” (13; cf. 1 Jn 2:1; Jas 4:2,3)

Jesus alone has claims with the Father and is the only mediator/advocate. You have no claim over what God must do.

1. “...so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.” (13; Jn. 17:4)

You are entrusted by Jesus to continue His work/mission of bringing glory to God. Prayer is not first to get something from God, but that God would get something from you in His answer to your prayer. (cf. Matt. 26:39, 42)

1. “...you will obey what I command.” (15; cf. Jn 15:7; 1 Jn. 5:14)

“And it came about that just as He (the LORD of hosts) called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen,” says the LORD of hosts. (Zech. 7:8-14; Prov. 1:28; Jer. 11:14; 1 Pet. 3:7)

Prayers must align with the will and purposes of Christ in His word by people living in line with the will and purposes of Christ.

*Christ-like conduct convinces us that God can trust us with His blessings.* (J.M.Boice)

What then is the goal of our prayer lives?

* How does your prayer life make you different from lost people?
* In what way are you handling disappointment/deprivation differently from the world?
* Do your prayers reflect a radically different purpose for your life than the desires of people who don’t know God? How likely are you to pray for the purposes of prayer we have learned today?
* How likely are you to experience answered prayer? What changes do you need to make to increase the likelihood of answered prayer?

To pursue the will of God. *Not my will, your will be done.* (Matt. 26:39)

To be transformed into the likeness of Christ. *This is the will of God, your sanctification.* (1 Thess. 4:3)

To continue the work and mission of Jesus. *Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing.*

(Jn. 14:12)

To bring glory to God in whatever He asks of me. *So that the Son may bring glory to the Father* (Jn. 14:13)

*Prayer is calling on Christ to do His work in and through me. (Jn. 14:10,12)*