

Faith and Prayer

Effective Prayer When You Pray

Ken Birks, Pastor/Teacher

I. Introductory Remarks.

Isaiah 65:24 *"It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear."*

How many of us would like to have a prayer life that gets this kind of results? How many of even believe that we can have this kind of a prayer life?

In this message I would like to look at the subject of prayer and how we can become more effectual in our prayer life. God, through His Word promises us that we can be effectual in our prayer lives. Through the Prophet Elijah's example, James shows us that we can all have an effective prayer life.

James 5:16-18 *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.***

Elijah prayed and there was a drought; he prayed again and rain came. This is a solemn reminder to us that prayer is not simply asking God for the pleasant things we desire, but an earnest yearning for, and entering into, the will of God, for ourselves and others, be it sweet or bitter. Such was the prayer of the Lord in Gethsemane.

Mark 14:35-36 *He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."*

Jesus gives His disciples a lesson on prayer when He cursed the fig tree in Mark chapter 11. He gives four main ingredients to effective prayer. It is these four basic ingredients that we shall look at in this message.

II. Lesson From The Fig Tree – Elements Of Effective Prayer.

Mark 11:12-14 *Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing*

but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

Mark 11:20-26 *Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ²¹ And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." ²² So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. ²³ "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. ²⁴ "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. ²⁵ "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶ "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

This parable is designed to illustrate to each one of us one great point, our need for faith in prayer. Because believing prayer taps God's power to accomplish the humanly impossible

Mark 10:27 *But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."*

Jesus exhorted His disciples to believe that they have already received whatever they request in prayer. Faith accepts it as good as done even though the actual answer is still future. *Have faith in God. (Vs. 22)* That is the key to answered prayer.

III. Four Key Elements of Effectual Prayer.

- **There are four key elements to effectual prayer found in these verses. Let's look at them.**

Mark 11:24-25 *"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask (desire KJV) when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.*

1. Desire Or Ask When You Pray.

Desire is the starting point. The word "desire" means to ask, beg, crave, call for, desire, or require. We get something from God when we have a heart-felt desire to have it. He wants us to have our desires.

Psalms 37:4 *Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

You might ask, "What if I want something not good?" If you can't pray about it, you shouldn't want it.

Psalms 107:9 *For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness.*

Proverbs 10:24 *The fear of the wicked will come upon him, and the desire of the righteous will be granted.*

1 John 3:22 *And whatever we ask (desire) we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*

1 John 5:14-15 *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

2. Believe When You Pray.

Mark 9:23-24 *Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"*

The word "believe" here means: to think to be true; to be persuaded of; to credit, place confidence in of the thing believed; to credit, have confidence in a moral or religious reference; used in the N.T. of the conviction and trust to which a man is impelled by a certain inner and higher prerogative and law of soul; to trust in Jesus or God as able to aid either in obtaining or in doing something: mere acknowledgment of some fact or event.

True belief in God will often be exhibited by continually going back to God for something; it will show that you believe He can do it and that you believe He will do it.

Matthew 7:7 *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

3. Receive When You Pray.

Luke 18:42 *Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you."*

Receive means to take with the hand, lay hold of, any person or thing in order to use it; to take up a thing to be carried; to take in order to carry away.

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

4. Forgive When You Pray.

Matthew 6:9,12 *"In this manner, therefore, pray.... forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*

We must always keep in mind the importance of asking the father to not only forgive us of our sins, but also to forgive those who have sinned against us.

IV. Concluding Remarks.

Jesus has promised to answer our prayers on the recognized premise that petitions must be in harmony with God's will. This enables faith to receive the answers God gives. God is always ready to respond to obedient believers' prayers, and they can petition Him knowing that no situation is impossible for Him.