

Prayer 03 Praying in the Name

by Alden Gannett

To pray in the name of Jesus Christ means to act by his authority and to pray as if he himself is doing the prayer.

Duration: 43:13

Scripture: Job 1:21, Mark 12:30-31, John 13:34-35, Acts 3:4-6, Galatians 5:22-23

Topics: "Name Of Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about the death of his seven-year-old daughter and how he prayed for her life to be spared. Despite his prayers, God took her home. However, the speaker rejoices in the fact that God answered his prayers in a different way by protecting his other children from a dangerous incident involving a fire. The sermon emphasizes the power of prayer and the importance of loving God and others as summarized in the commandments.

Transcript

Studying together in our series on prayer, Luke chapter 11, where we saw together the request of the disciples, Lord, teach us to pray. And then last night, together, we saw the hindrances to prayer. In one word, if I regard what? Iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

And we saw together, from the word, various hindrances, specifics, that keep God from answering our prayers. Now, this morning, we want to turn to one of the conditions for answered prayer, praying in the name of Christ. What does it mean to pray in that worthy and precious name? Let's turn in our Bibles, please, to John chapters 14, 15, and 16.

John 14, verses 12-14. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also. And greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.

And whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. Chapter 15, verse 16.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. Chapter 16, verse 23. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Verse 26. And at that day ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you. Praying in the name of the Lord Jesus, let us pray.

Our Father, teach us thy truth today. Give us a new appreciation of what it means to pray in that worthy and all-prevailing name. May we enter in and experience this wahi and holy privilege.

May the ends of the earth hear the gospel, because we have been faithful to pray in that worthy name. Speak, we pray, to each heart in Christ's name. Amen.

I am struck immediately with verse 24 of chapter 16 of John, where we are told, Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Here is a new privilege for the children of God. The inference here is that Adam, that Abraham, that Moses, that David, that Isaiah, that King Hezekiah, these great men of God in the Old Testament, did not have this privilege.

That even the disciples of our Lord, as they were with him in his three-and-one-half years of sojourn on earth and ministry, they then did not have that privilege of praying in his name. Here is something new. This will be their privilege after Pentecost, when there is a union which makes possible this praying in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You remember in the Old Testament they had a tabernacle and a temple, and you recall the people of Israel would come, and a high priest would represent them to God. Now every believer is a priest. Martin Luther, you remember, championed that great truth and uncovered it, so to speak, or rediscovered it, so to speak, there in the great days of the Reformation.

And he saw in 1 Peter, chapter 2, that every single child of God is a believer priest. We are a nation of priests before the Lord. So every one of us now has that right to come directly to that throne of grace.

And all of us love that wonderful promise of Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 16, "...let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Here is something new, a new privilege that Old Testament saints did not have, and that church saints have for very special reasons which we shall soon discover, I trust, from the word of God. Now, first of all this morning, let's define the term, in the name of Jesus Christ. What is meant by this terminology? Let's turn first of all to Matthew 20, Matthew 18, and get a suggestion from this text.

Matthew 18, verse 5. Do you remember the context? Our Lord picking up the little child in his arms and urging upon them, verse 3, "...except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same as greatest in the kingdom of heaven." And then this verse, "...and whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name, receive it me." The name represents the person. Your name does.

My name does. When you think of Vera Willey, for example, you think of all kinds of things, don't you? You think first of all she's a good Scotsman. Oh, no you don't.

A good English lady. Yes, a very proper English lady. A very gracious host.

A very joyous Christian. These and many, many other things we think of when we think of the name Mrs. Willey. And so we could go around the room this morning.

Yes, the name represents the person. And with our Lord Jesus Christ, his name represents his person and his work on the cross of Calvary, just as your name represents you, represents your activities, so the wonderful name of our Lord represents his person and his work on our behalf. Turn next to Acts chapter 3, another illustration of the meaning, the definition of the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts chapter 3, another exciting context, you remember. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, and a certain man, lame from his birth, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms, and Peter fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

Isn't that a strange invitation? And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. And then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. This context illustrates that using the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is acting by his authority, acting by his authority. Peter used the name of the Lord Jesus, by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rise up and walk. And you know the rest of the story. He did, went into the temple leaping and praising God.

To use the name, then, of the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer is to act by his authority as we pray, and it is to pray as if he himself is doing the prayer. The name represents his person. The name represents his work.

The name represents his authority. Now, we next ask the question, What right do we have to use that name? First of all, one must be a believer. One must be a believer.

One must have God as his Father, of course, to use the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Another is suggested three reasons why we have the right to use the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the first reason is found in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. This first reason is a legal union, a legal union. 2 Corinthians 5. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

All things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

Notice, he's given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To it that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and notice again, hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, because of this, we are ambassadors for Christ.

As, O God, did we seek you by us, we begged you in Christ's stead. Be ye reconciled to God, for it made him to be sin for us to do no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. God hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.

God hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors. Admiral Harriman is representing the United States in the Paris peace talks.

They're still going on. I haven't read the newspaper the last couple of days. Still going on.

Now, he is an ambassador of the United States. A couple of days ago, he sent one of his assistants back to Washington, D.C. to make reports to the President, and no doubt to get instructions further about how to dialogue with the Vietnamese. He represents the United States.

We represent the God of heaven. We represent the Lord Jesus Christ. We are ambassadors for Christ.

God hath committed to us the word of reconciliation, the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, in Christ's stead we beseech, we beg men to be reconciled to God. You see, then we have the right to use his name.

We are his representatives, his ambassadors. We, therefore, use his name. A legal union.

The second union is a union of life, a union of life. Philippians 121 says, To me to live is Christ. The word is is not in the Greek New Testament.

To me to live is Christ, to die is gain. Galatians 2.20, say it with me. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.

Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Not I, but Christ liveth in me. And so Paul is saying that my life as a believer is the very life of the risen Christ.

In Romans chapter 6, you remember, we died with him, we were buried with him, and raised in newness of life, and do walk in that newness of life. Colossians 3.4, Christ who is our life. Yes, I may use his name because of a union of life.

There is a third kind of union that gives me the right to use his name. A legal union, a union of life, and a union of love. Ephesians chapter 5. Verse 22, Why submit yourselves unto your own husband as unto the Lord? For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Savior of the body.

Verse 25, Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. Verse 28, So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies, he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord, the church.

For we are members of his body. 31, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they too shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Here is a union illustrated by the union between a husband and his wife, a union which is spiritual, a union which is between Jesus Christ, the head of the church, and the individual members of his church, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, a union of love. Because Christ is the bride, and we the bridegroom. Yeah, let's turn it around, shall we? Thank you.

Christ is the bridegroom, and we are the bride. Therefore we have the right to use his name. The biggest mistake I ever made in my married life was to go to the bank and have two people sign, Audenay or Georgetta S. Gannett.

You men know what this has meant at your house, eh? No complaints. Union of life. That's part of it, isn't it? Every so often I hear some man brag about the fact that he has his own private bank account.

I can appreciate the remark, but it's not right. A union of life, a union of love, here illustrated by Christ, the bridegroom, and we individual members, the bride. You see why then we have the right to use his name? We are his ambassadors, a legal union.

He is our very life, a life union, and here a union of love, he the bridegroom, and we the bride. Now, because of this relationship, what responsibilities go with these relationships? What is the responsibility that goes with a legal union, that we are ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not the responsibility of full and complete submission to the will of another? Harriman has no rights over there in France to make his own decisions. He cannot act contrary to Washington and properly represent his country.

He cannot say, I think we ought to offer this compromise, when he has had direct orders from Washington that this cannot be done. He cannot represent us with a will of his own. Therefore, if we are to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must come in prayer with only one will, and that will being the will of the Father, and have the Spirit of our Lord as he prayed, I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

I do always those things that please him, not as I will, but as thou wilt. Did you ever come to the Lord in prayer with a stubborn will? I'm sure all of us have. We insisted upon certain things, almost demanded from God, now Lord, it's got to be so.

It's got to be so. It's got to be so. I shall never forget when a teenager, going off on a gospel team to a church up there in New York State, and the speaker was a professor from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, a guest speaker for the evening.

He said to us as he was walking on the platform, I've been led of God to change my sermon, as he was walking up to the platform. The one thing I remember his saying that night was the story of the death of his own daughter, a seven-year-old daughter. He spoke of what a lovely girl she was, what a sweet, precious child she was, and he recalled the time when God took her home.

And no doubt he prayed and prayed and prayed that God would spare her life and give her a rich and full life in service to the Lord Jesus Christ. But he told us that he bowed there as he saw that little life, so to speak, go into the presence of God. He bowed beside that lifeless body and thanked the Lord.

This sounds like Job, doesn't it? The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away what? Blessed be the name of the Lord. Now, when I come into the presence of my Heavenly Father in prayer, I indeed am to be bold, as we read, as we quoted a few moments ago from Hebrews. Yes indeed, I am to claim in Jesus' name.

But when I am bold, when I make claims before God, it must be with a certainty, it must be with the assurance that what I am bold about, what I am claiming, is in the will of God. There must be that spirit of submission. I must have experienced Romans 12.1, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what? That good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Now, we cannot pray in His name when there is that insistence upon my own selfish, stubborn will. I cannot use the name of Christ in a selfish, carnal way. I am His ambassador.

I am to represent Him. I am to do His will. That's it.

The second union, the union of life. What does this require? This requires my entering in absolutely into the reality of Christ being my very life. Is this mere theology, or can this work in experience? Is Paul just giving us some theological niceties when he tells us that not I but Christ liveth in me, and to me to live is Christ, and Christ who is our life? And as he has therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.

Is he simply giving us theological niceties, or can it be a reality in experience? You and I know it's the truth. It can be ours in experience. It was in the experience of the Apostle Paul, and it can be yours, and it can be mine.

That actually through this body, actually through this personality, can be expressed the resurrection light of the Lord Jesus. This does not mean that we then will have halos to polish. This does not mean, then, that there will always be some magnetic glow that goes from our faces like atomic energy.

It does not mean that our feet will be six inches off the floor all the time. It does not mean that we walk around the chapel with hands in the air shouting glory all the time. No, no, no, no, no.

God is love, love. The fruit of the Spirit is love, love. You remember Ephesians chapter 3? Let's turn to it.

Ephesians chapter 3, right here in our same epistle. What is the expression of the indwelling Christ in experience? Verse 14 of Ephesians 3, "...for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell," literally dwell thoroughly, literally be at home in your heart's house, "...by faith that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know," what? "...the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled," literally, "...unto all the fulness of God." Did you notice the three persons of the Trinity here? In verse 16, the Holy Spirit strengthening us with might. Why? Because of that old nature, because of that self-will, because of the carnal desires within that keep Christ from living his life through us.

Then the second person, verse 17, "...Christ dwelling," or being at home, "...in our hearts by faith." You see, the Holy Spirit is at work to make possible Christ's dwelling, and then ultimately are being filled unto all the fullness of God. Now, my point in turning to this text is, what is the outward, external expression of Christ living within? In one word, what's the expression of Christ in these verses? Love, indeed, love. The outliving of the indwelling Christ is the expression of love from our hearts to the Lord.

We love because he first loved us. We love one another because he first loved us. We love the lost because he first loved us, and the expression of the indwelling Christ is love.

That that we can't know quite the length and the breadth or the height of the depth of this, this incomparable love of Christ, that love is expressed through this intellect, intellect. My thought processes are the means through which Jesus Christ will express himself in love. I will think in terms of a love relationship to the Lord and to believers and to the lost.

My emotions will express, be the vehicle through which will be expressed the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, as I will love that which he loves and hate that which he hates. And then the will, decisions will be made of use of time and energy and strength and means. For the expression of the love of Christ to the Lord and to his people and to a world that needs the Savior.

And so, to reduce that person of Christ, and I'm not reducing God to anything per se, but the expression of that person in down-to-earth, practical, shoe-leather Christianity is love, love. That's why Paul wrote to the Galatians, the fruit of the Spirit is love, singular, not fruits, fruit. Now that love is expressed through joy and through peace and long-suffering and gentleness and faith and meekness and self-control.

You remember, Jesus had a new commandment I've given to you, to see what? Love one another as I have loved you, and hereby shall all men know that you are my disciples, if he hath loved one for another. When Jesus summarized the commandments of the Old Testament, what did he say? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and then thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. So, whether it be the summary of the Old Testament commandments, or whether it be the new commandment under grace, the essence is the same love.

Ah, but for the believer under grace, it is not with all our hearts, but it is the very love of the indwelling Christ. Do you remember, Jesus said, I am with you and shall be where? In you. And from the day of Pentecost on, the risen, living Son of God in spirit actually came to dwell within each and every believer, and he's in you this morning.

If you're a Christian, if you have trusted Christ as your Savior, he's in you today. Yes, the image of the invisible God is in you. The creator and sustainer of the universe is in you.

The living head of the church is in you. The one who reconciled us to God through his death on the cross is in you this morning. He's there, and you may use his name because of a union of life.

Not I, but Christ living in me. And the life which I now live, I live by what? Faith. Ephesians chapter three, Christ shall dwell down deep in your hearts by faith.

We trust him to live in us and through us. Thirdly, how to express that union of love? How does a wife express her love to her husband? Is the relationship not one of dependence? The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. And therefore, for the wife, as we saw last night, to take her proper place in the home, then she, as the bride, is to have a relationship of subjection, of dependence on her husband.

And so our life, day by day and moment by moment, as members of the bride of Christ, our life is to be one of dependence upon our risen Lord. And when that's the spirit, when that's the attitude, when that's my heart, then I can truly use that name and represent that name before God the Father. I heard some years ago of a young man who'd come back from the war, and he had a dear friend in the service, and he came back to meet the parents of his dear friend.

His dear friend's father was the president of a large corporation, and so he came to this strange city and met this gentleman's secretary and asked if he could see Mr. So-and-so, and she checked with him, and he didn't have any time for this strange young man. The young man said to the secretary, Would you please inquire again? It's very important that I see him. And again the busy executive said to his secretary, Tell the young man I'm too busy today.

I don't have time to see him. Well, the third time this young man said to the secretary, requesting an audience, and said, Will you tell Mr. So-and-so that I was beside his son when he was shot in the war, and that his son had a special message for his father, and I have come to convey it? And the secretary went in to the executive again, and immediately the executive came out, and immediately he rushed the young

man into his office, and there had an audience with his father. He used the name of another.

Beloved, because we are his ambassadors, we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we submit to his will, because there is a union of life, and it is actually the risen living Christ within us, we may pray in his name, when by faith we actually trust him to live through us, hence to pray through us. And when he does, he in whom is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, prays through us.

He in whom is all wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, he prays through us. When we are dependent upon him as the bride upon the bridegroom, then we can rightfully use his name, a union of life. Now, what are the results as we close? Turn back to our text.

What are the results? Let's look at the results in John chapter 14, verses 12 through 14. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father. Here are greater works promised, because he goes to his Father.

Well, how is all this related? He explains, verse 13, And whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And if ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. Now, what are these greater works? Are they greater in quality than what our Lord Jesus Christ did on earth? No, no, a thousand times no, for you and I as human beings cannot perform greater works than the living God of heaven and earth.

They are greater in extent because he was one person on earth working in the power of the Holy Spirit of God, and at times performing miracles in his own name. And now there will be many, many, many believers scattered abroad the earth, and he will indwell every single one of us. And he, the risen Lord, will be inside every one of us with that resurrection life and power, and now greater works, greater in extent, because there will be many, many, many more believers scattered, and because we can pray in that all-prevailing name.

Greater works, a result of praying in the name of Christ. Is God still performing miracles? I'm looking at many this morning. Every time a soul is saved, another miracle has been performed, right? And the greatest of all miracles, beloved.

We certainly do not minimize the need of the physical. Many, many people express prayer for physical needs, and properly so, and God does answer prayer. But let us remember that there were certain special epochs of miracles in history for special reasons.

These days, God's great heart and God's great burden is the salvation of precious souls in the completing of the church, the body of Christ. A whole subject of its own I do not have time for this morning, but greater works, greater works. How the Lord must be grieved when he hears some of his servants, as I have, say, oh I'm just a little, meek, puny servant, and I can't do much, and I can't be used of God, and I don't have many gifts, and I want to serve the Lord in my little way.

This does not please the Lord. Greater works, he says, in answer to prayer. If you're a believer today, you can pray in that name if you'll meet his conditions.

Let us not settle for small things. This is not the day of small things. Let us see God do greater things in terms of the great commission, in terms of the completion of his church, the body of Christ.

Look at verse 13, and whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do. Think of it. Whatever ye shall ask in my name.

We have seen this morning that praying in the name of Jesus is far more than tacking that name on the end of a prayer, but it's the spirit of submission. It's Christ actually living, hence praying through us. You see then, what we ask for, he is asking.

He actually is making the request through us to the Father. And the promise, whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the sun. Look at another result, verse 16 of chapter 15.

You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and are dangered that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you. Here it's in the context of bearing fruit, the context of bearing fruit. And in chapter 15 of John, the fruit is certainly the fruit of Christian character on the one hand, for love and joy are clearly in the context.

I suggest that verse 16 implies the fruit of Christian witness, for we go and bring forth fruit. Fear evangelism, fear a blessing in a ministry to other people, and he says we can pray in his name and see the Lord bring forth fruit to his praise and glory. Chapter 16, verse 24.

Still another result of praying in that name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your jaw may be full.

And isn't it edifying to be in a gathering where people stand up and give testimony to answer prayers? How it rejoices our hearts to hear how the Lord has performed a miracle, how the Lord has done remarkable things, how he's answered prayer. We phoned our children last night. We forgot to leave the telephone number of Park of the Palms for our children.

We have at home an 18-year-old son and a 17-year-old daughter and a 13-year-old son, and our eldest son at home is a very responsible one indeed, and so we left our children with him. And they were having T-bone steaks, no less. Where Mother found the money for this, I'm not sure.

But anyway, they seem to have it when we're away. I don't know why Mother does this, but anyway, we've had such delicious meals here at Park of the Palms, this compensates for it. We got the word last night that the children were out there, and they had their fire on the little rock patio we have in the back of our home.

So the live coals were on this rock, and then the grate was raised by some building blocks around it, and the report was that while they were inside eating their steaks, a blast that all the neighbors heard outside. We were told that the grate went seven feet in the air when that rock burst, and the hot ashes were spread all over the yard. And had our children been sitting there in the yard eating, or had Ron been there in the chair as he had been watching the fire before, this would have hit him.

How wonderful our Lord answered prayer as we prayed again and again before we left, and while we were traveling, and after we arrived here. O God, take care of our children, surround them with thy love and care, and what joy in my heart today to thank the Lord publicly for caring for our children. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.

Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. What a privilege to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. May we this day, and every day till he comes, meet this all-demanding condition and see God do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think.

May we pray. Blessed Father, what a joy it is to share the word of God and to see in that word the great, great promises for prayer. We ask this day that thou make this promise of praying in the name of Christ a special blessing to each of us, we pray.

Give us grace to enter in, to meet the condition of this promise for prayer, and see greater works, to see these wonderful blessings of much fruit to the glory of God, and to see our joy made full as we can declare what the Lord has done. Blessed throughout this day at Park of the Palms, may the glory of God be upon us as we share together in fellowship in the name of Christ. Amen.

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