

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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As You Have Loved Me

Dear Friend,

Praying publicly in services, special events, and for the sick is just a part of being a minister. Many Christians shy away from praying in front of people, unsure of what to say. But, every once in a while I do have the opportunity to hear someone pray. By listening closely I learn a lot about what a person believes. For instance, when I hear someone say, "If it be thy will, oh God" regarding healing, then sadly I know that person doesn't believe Jesus has already paid the price for them to be healed.

Our public prayers are influenced by the situations in which we find ourselves. Praying publicly reveals what we believe because it comes out our mouths when we pray. For instance, during the Thanksgiving Holiday, which we are celebrating, someone generally prays over the Thanksgiving meal and offers up thanks to God for His provision. The prayer is prayed, everyone says amen and begins to eat questioning nothing about what was prayed because it was easy to believe.

Public prayers give us a glimpse into a person's beliefs, as well as, a taste of their personal relationship with Jesus, so let's change the situation and see what happens. Instead of sitting down to a Thanksgiving meal, let's picture the same family surrounding a loved one in the hospital in need of a miracle. The pressure is on and everyone can feel it. Like it or not, what we believe in our heart about this situation is going to come out our mouth when we pray.

"Can anyone pray the prayer of faith for our loved one?" Clearly the change in circumstances has affected those praying. This is not a simple prayer over a meal. This is a life or death prayer. The words chosen will tell us whether or not the person believes Jesus has already paid the price for us to be healed, as well as, the depth of their fellowship with Him. If they don't believe, they often pray a prayer that sounds like they are begging God for healing. Begging God does not produce results because it is void of faith.

This may come as a shock, but crying and being emotional won't cause God to respond to our prayers either. Being loud or quiet, crying a bucket of tears or having no tears at all; none of this influences God answering our prayers. What influences God is faith, faith that comes out of a heart that believes God's word. (Romans 10:17)

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

Something else that we should remember is this; the one being prayed for has a part to play in **believing** and **receiving** the answer from God. All too often we have the mistaken idea that the person doing the praying has the sole responsibility for receiving the answer. But, the truth of the matter is that the person being prayed for has a part to play.

Many Christians, particularly Charismatic, Spirit filled Christians, seem to have the idea that all they need to do is find the most anointed person and have them pray for them and they don't have to believe anything. That, my friend, couldn't be further from the truth. Search out the number of times Jesus told people that the answer to their prayer depended on or was determined by what they believed. (Matthew 8:13, 9:22, 15:28, Mark 5:34, 10:52, Luke 7:50, 8:48, 17:19, 18:42)

Even Jesus Himself was limited by what the person being prayed for believed. If Jesus was limited by the person's faith, or lack thereof, certainly the beliefs of the person we pray for will have an effect on whether or not they receive. The idea that as a person receiving prayer, "I don't have to believe anything", is wrong. In many cases I believe this mentality is rooted in laziness; pure laziness on the part of the believer wanting someone to take responsibility for them, spiritually. No one can take responsibility for your spiritual development. That's your job.

I'm speaking from experience. I have been just as guilty as anyone else for allowing myself to become spiritually lazy. I became complacent when it came to continuing to build my own faith for the health of my body. I allowed that if I was ever faced with something my faith couldn't handle I would just let ***“so and so”*** pray for me because he has had great miracles in his ministry. Shame on me! Boy, was I being deceived. God doesn't want us depending on someone else's faith. He wants us to continue to develop our own faith by reading and confessing His Word.

Summing up what we have learned so far: 1) Our circumstances will affect what we are praying for, 2) What we truly believe is going to come out our mouth when

we pray, and 3) Even when we are the person being prayed for we have a responsibility to believe that we receive the answer to the prayer.

With all that in mind, John's gospel provides us with a rare opportunity to **hear** one of Jesus' prayers to the Father in which He refers directly to us. The entire seventeenth chapter is dedicated to this prayer. Notice how the timing of His prayer was influenced by the circumstances. Let's take what we have learned so far in this letter and apply it to this prayer.

First, let's consider the circumstances surrounding Jesus' prayer. His prayer took place shortly before His crucifixion. With only hours left to live, Jesus' **circumstances** directly affected what He prayed. The importance He placed on what He prayed cannot be understated. Anyone who knows they are about to die doesn't waste their words, especially Jesus. In fact, I can't imagine Jesus ever wasting words. So, for someone who places such a high value on their Words, what were the Words that were so important for Jesus to pray before His death?

We will be paying close attention to what Jesus prayed for His disciples. (John 17:9)

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

Just in case you thought Jesus was only praying on behalf of His disciples and not for us today, check out this verse. (John 17:20)

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

Jesus included us in this prayer when He said, "them also which shall believe on Me through their Word." Think about it, Jesus prayed for us before dying on that cross. So, what was contained in the most important prayer Jesus could have ever prayed on our behalf? Jesus prayed that God would keep us from evil, which is the dominion of darkness, including satan himself. (John 17:15)

"I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil."

Do you **believe** Jesus' prayer is being answered in your life and that God is keeping you from all of satan's devices? The point I believe is so important here is the fact that the prayer Jesus prayed is only half of the equation. **We are responsible to believe and receive what Jesus prayed on our behalf.** Just

having John 17:15 in the Bible doesn't mean that anyone is receiving the benefit of those verses. We must allow John 17:15 to work on the inside of us until we can believe and receive the results.

Again, keeping in mind the significance of the timing of Jesus' prayer, what else did Jesus believe to be vitally important for us? (John 17:23)

“I in them, and thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me.”

What was so important to Jesus was that we know the love of our Father and the extent of God's love to us. Jesus wants us to know right here today that God the Father loves us as much as He loves Him. Of all the things that Jesus could have prayed at that crucial moment in time, it was the love of God to us that was the most important. It was equally important for Him to pray this prayer to the Father for us as it was for us to hear this prayer, a prayer filled with faith and rooted in the personal relationship Jesus held with His Father.

So, let me ask you, have these Words affected your life? Do you see them in the light of the importance Jesus clearly placed on them? Are you believing and releasing your faith in Jesus' prayer and receiving the answer?

Remember, the fact that the prayer is in the Bible doesn't mean it is working for you. Faith, your faith in God's Word, is essential in order to see the manifestation of Jesus' prayer in your own life. Earlier I talked about laziness, expecting someone else to do our spiritual work for us. We can't just look at this prayer and think, "Well, Jesus prayed it so it must come to pass in my life." **Your faith is required to believe that you receive the answer to Jesus' prayer in your life.**

Your Father God loves you with the same love He loves Jesus. Let me say that again. **Your Father God loves you with the same love He loves Jesus.** Grab hold of this truth and let it become a reality in your life because then faith will be there for you to receive and walk in the manifestation of Jesus' prayer.

God loves us so much. I believe we have only scratched the surface of understanding His love to us. I pray that you will make a point of studying this seventeenth chapter of John and developing your faith to receive all that Jesus prayed for you to have. Glory to God. God is so good.

Mark Jenkins