

Prayer That God Answers

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[0 : 00] Well, good evening, everyone. Let us look this evening at Psalm 25. And as you're making your way there, let me open us up with a prayer this evening.

God, we just come and put ourselves before you this evening. And God, we come and submit ourselves here this evening. And we ask, God, that as we gather in this place, that we would remember your goodness and remember your kindness towards us, God.

And that we would remember your greatness, God, and remember the wonderful things that you have done through the course of history, God, how all things work together for your good.

And God, also remember the great wonders that you have done in our own life. So, God, as we come, let us not lose sight of how fantastic and how wonderful, how amazing, how beyond our recognition that you truly are.

We ask all this in your name. Amen. As we come to Psalm 25, before we read Psalm 25, I want to do a little preface work.

[1 : 16] And the preface work is going to come from a verse in John chapter 14. And this is a verse that repeats an idea that is found in other parts of Scripture.

It's the idea that Jesus conveys that if we ask anything in his name, he will do it. And this is an example of one of those instances where Jesus says, all you need to do is ask, and I will do it.

Let me read that verse for us. This is going to come from John 14, verses 13 and 14. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. So, we come to a verse like this. Does that mean we can really ask anything?

And that God will do it for us? And I consider to remember coming to this verse at a season of life and thinking, they don't really mean that, right?

[2 : 15] Like, it's not like a wish list, is it? Like, I don't think that's worked that way, you know, as I had gone through my walk of faith up to that point. I felt like, you know, there were some times I asked for things that God didn't seem to come through it.

But one of the things I want us to think about is what are the kind of things that we do ask from God? That's going to be an important thing for us this evening as we look.

What are the things that we are asking from God? And who is the benefit of those things of which we ask? And certainly one of the things I want us to see this evening, we know this as we start. This is something I think that we know, is that God's not a genie in a bottle, right?

We don't rub the lamp and out pops God to fulfill whatever you want. But what Jesus does say, though, he says, hey, if you ask anything in my name, I will do it. And as we go into Psalm 25, I want us to have that idea in our mind.

What is it that Jesus will do for us? Like, what does this mean when Jesus says, if you ask for anything, that I will do. As we come and also preface this psalm for us this evening, one of the things that I do want us to think about, too, is that God didn't send his son into the world and send his son to a cross on our behalf, right?

[3 : 39] So that we could just simply have kind of like this wishless God, this God that's there to kind of fulfill things that make our life better, make our life easier, the things that somehow put us into a life of ease or a life of more prestige or a life of more power or a life of more wealth.

So that's not why Jesus went to the cross. Jesus went to the cross on our behalf. God sent his son to the cross on our behalf because we have a serious problem. That's our sin that separates us. And God said, I want to have a relationship with you.

And God is saying, I want to have a relationship with you, realizes that he's going to need to send Jesus on our behalf because our sin is what separates us. And in this process of being separated from God, then Jesus comes so that we can have a relationship with God.

One of the things that's going to happen in this relationship is that we're going to strive. One of the goals of our relationship with God through Christ is that we become more like Christ. And as we become more like Christ, I think that our asking will be more Christ-like.

And then we'll have a better idea when Jesus says to us, if you ask anything in my name, I will do it. As we come to Psalm 25, I want you to think of this as a great example of how to petition God.

[5 : 01] A great example of how to ask for things from God. And as we come and read the Psalm, I'll give you just a little bit of insight onto the Psalm. That it is an acrostic of the alphabet.

And so in the Hebrew, it works through the alphabet. Each line starts with the next letter of the alphabet. And as you come and read the Psalm with me, you may feel like there's some sort of pattern there that it may be hard to identify.

And that would be it. There is an intentional pattern to it that just doesn't make its way to us through the translation. Finally, as I come and read this Psalm to us this evening, what I'm going to do is as I'm reading, I'm going to emphasize the petitions that are here in the Psalm.

And I want you to hear the petitions that the Psalmist is bringing to the Lord. Here we go. Let me read this Psalm 25 for us.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust. Let me not be put to shame. Let not my enemies exalt over me.

[6 : 07] Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame. They shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth. And teach me. For you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all the day long. Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love.

For they have been from old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions. According to your steadfast love, remember me. For the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord. Therefore, he instructs the sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right. And teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness.

For those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. For your name's sake, O Lord. Pardon my guilt. For it is great. Who is the man who fears the Lord?

[7 : 12] He will be instructed in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being. And his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him.

And he makes known to them his covenant. My eyes are ever toward the Lord. For he will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me.

For I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged. Bring me out of my distress. Consider my affliction and my trouble.

And forgive all my sins. Consider how many are my foes. And with what violent hatred they hate me.

O guard my soul and deliver me. Let me not be put to shame. For I take refuge in you. May integrity and uprightness preserve me.

[8 : 10] For I wait for you. Redeem Israel, O God. Out of all of his troubles. As we come and look at the passage.

I want us to look at a couple of things this evening. The first thing that I'll have us look at is prayers that God always answers. And the second thing will be prayer for the forgiveness of sins.

As we look at this idea of prayer that God always answers. I want us to look to verses 4 and 5. And I'll reread those for us now.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your past. Lead me in your truth and teach me. For you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all day long.

You see that the psalmist here has come and prayed before God. To make me know your past, O Lord. Teach me your past. Lead me in your truth and teach me.

[9 : 15] The thing that we will find is that God will always answer those prayers. Because God wants us to be people who come to him. And are willing to submit to him. And this is what the psalmist does.

As he comes and he submits before God. He says, make me to know your ways. Teach me your past. I need to know your past. Lead me in your truth and teach me.

So the psalmist comes before the Lord. He submits to the Lord's leadership. And says, show me the way. Show me the way that you would have me to go.

And when we think of this submission that the psalmist comes. We know that God will answer those who come to him. And ask to be taught. And ask to be led. The question I would have for you is.

Why don't we pray prayers of submission? If we come before God saying. God, I need to submit to you better. I recognize the failure of my own will.

[10 : 16] I recognize my tendency to find my own path. I recognize the tendency to turn away from your truth. I recognize the tendency to try to teach myself.

So why don't we come and pray those prayers before God? I would say this. It's because we don't want them answered. There's part of us that still struggles with that sin that wants to rule our life.

And when we come and pray. God, teach me. Let me submit to you. God's going to be like, I got you. Let's make that happen.

God. But there's part of us that doesn't want that to happen. So my challenge for you this evening as you come and think of prayers. Is to pray of submission. True, indeed, full submission before the Lord.

And I put it out there with a word of warning. That if you pray such prayers, God will go to work on your life. And it may not be a pleasant experience.

[11 : 22] But it will be an experience that is better for you. Second thing I want us to see. Is that there are prayer for forgiveness of sins.

So as we look at the prayer for the forgiveness of sins. One of the things I want you to think about is why do you, why do I, why do we seek the forgiveness of sins?

Each Sunday when we come to our service, part of our service is the confession of sin. The corporate confession of sin.

Then we have a time of individual confession of sin. So why do we come and seek the forgiveness of our sins? As you think about that, I'm going to just point out a philosophical perspective.

It's called egoism. Egoism is rooted in the idea that everything that we do comes from self-interest. And obviously that's not compatible with what we think of as the scripture and what God desires for us.

[12 : 30] But that is a perspective that some people hold to. That everything that we do comes from self-interest. And it's this idea of egoism.

So with egoism, why do you stay late to help a co-worker? Well, when you're working on that project next week, you're going to want that co-worker to stay with you. And by helping a co-worker this week, you know they'll be more likely to help you next week.

With egoism, why do you help your neighbor move some heavy furniture? Well, it's because your neighbor makes a lot of noise at night. And they kind of annoy you. And they know they kind of annoy you.

And you're thinking, maybe if I build up some goodwill by helping them with the furniture, that maybe, maybe they won't quite make that so much noise at night. With egoism, why do we give money to the relief of the poor?

From the egoism perspective, you give money to the poor so that you feel better about the stuff you have. That way you don't have to feel quite so guilty about whatever money you have because you've given some of it away to the poor.

[13 : 39] With egoism, why do we seek the forgiveness of sins? Why do we seek it? Is it just for our own benefit?

Is it so that we feel better before God? Is it so that we can experience the blessings that come from a Christian life? Is it all about us? Is it all about me?

Is it just for my goodness and my betterment that I seek the forgiveness of sins? With this thought in mind, I want us to look back at this psalm.

I want us to see verse 11. And there the psalmist declares in verse 11, Pardon my guilt, for it is great.

Pardon my guilt. He seeks forgiveness, for it is great. As we look and see what comes immediately before it, I want to point you to verse 8.

[14 : 39] And we see there that the psalmist acknowledges the great character of God. He said, And then the psalmist goes on into verse 9.

And begins to talk about being humble. He leads the humble in what is right. He teaches the humble his way. As we think of this idea of God working upon the humble.

If there was anything I might put as the opposite of egoism, it would be humility. And indeed, that is to what God calls us, is humility. So what does it come when we are humble and we seek the forgiveness of sins?

Let's continue in verse 10 with this thought in mind. There it says in verse 10, We see there the need for submission.

The submission before God. The humble submission before God. It says, You are in charge, God. I am not. It's not about me. And then in verse 11 it goes, For your name's sake, O Lord.

[15 : 51] Pardon my guilt, for it is great. For the sake of God. For your sake, God. Forgive my sins. And your forgiveness.

God, you. You will declare your greatness. You will declare your love for us. It's amazing that the Islamist comes and seeks the forgiveness of sins.

The pardon for guilt. And says, It's not about me. God, it's about your goodness. It's about who you are. And in forgiving me, God, your greatness is shown to the people.

So as we come and pray this evening, I would put that time before you to think about a couple of things. Prayers that God will always answer. Jesus says, If you ask for me in my name, I'll do it.

Well, let's think about some of those prayers that God will always answer for us. And then as we come and even think of this idea of the forgiveness of sins. That the forgiveness of sins is not about self-glory.

[16 : 59] It's not about self-advancement. It's about the glory of God. And submitting ourselves in a humble way before the Lord. So that his greatness can be revealed through his gracious act of forgiving us.

Let me close this portion of our time this evening in prayer. God, we come before you. We do ask, God, that we would be people who are humble.

God, and dare we say that we come and say, God, humble us. Humble us. Humble us. God, and we know that you will. Because that is what you desire from us. God, and we know that in humbling ourselves, that we will serve you better.

God, we will serve you more faithfully. God, your kingdom will grow in advance. So, God, we come before you and say, humble us. This is what we ask from you this evening.

God, and we come recognizing that in asking that, God, that you will change the trajectory of our life. God, you will bring situations into our life that are simply unpleasant. And things that we might not want to go through.

[18 : 09] But, God, we know that your love will carry us through. Right? And that, God, you will be close beside us all the way. So, God, I do pray for each of us that we would have the boldness and the courage to say, humble us.

We ask all this in your name. Amen.