

Message #1049  
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"THE POWER OF ONLY TWO OR THREE"  
{Matthew 18:19-20}

Trinity Presbyterian Church  
March 21, 2004

#### THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF PRAYER

Jesus told His disciples...

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them!" {Matthew 18:18-20}

Seldom do we stop and meditate upon what we read in God's word--for if we did, we would put into action what we've read.

As believers, I don't think we've ever utilized to the fullest the privilege we have of talking to God with faith believing that He hears every prayer...that He wants to meet our needs...if only we bring them to Him...and that He indeed answers our prayers--in accordance with His divine will for us!

Jesus says quite simply...

"...if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for it will be done for you by My Father in heaven...!"

In John we read...

"I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it!" {John 14:13-14}

"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." {John 15:7}

Again in Matthew we read...

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."  
{Matthew 21:22}

"I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move!

Nothing will be impossible for you!" {Matthew 17:20}

I want to probe into these thoughts with you this morning. Just what did Jesus mean...and...what did He really say?

#### DOES GOD TRULY ANSWER EVERY PRAYER?

Yes! God indeed answers EVERY prayer; however, God answers EVERY prayer according to His divine will! He may respond...

...yes

...no

...not now

...you've got to be kidding

He knows what's best for us.

#### 1. Some Prayers are Selfish

God will not give us selfish desires--especially those things we might ask that might be to our own detriment...or to the detriment of others.

...God won't bless us at the expense of another  
...God isn't obligated to give us a parking place when we're late for an appointment  
...God won't give a student an "A" when we haven't studied  
...God doesn't have to give you a new Mercedes or the house in the hills--He's promised to meet our needs--NOT our greeds! When Jesus speaks of praying in His name, He is speaking of a humble attitude--the attitude/mind of Christ--not praying for selfish gain! Remember, Jesus actually prayed that He might not have to face the cross...

"...He began to be sorrowful and troubled. He said, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death...' He then fell with His face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will...'

"Yet, a second time He prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done...'" {Matthew 16:38-39, 42}  
And the Scripture tells us He prayed this same prayer yet a third time.

...Jesus' prayer was answered--but NOT as He desired!

...He didn't want to face the cross

...He knew the torturous events that were to come...the pain...the humiliation

...He asked God to take this from Him...yet, He added, "Your will be done!"

...and that is our model for prayer!

I didn't want to face cancer surgery fifteen years ago!

I didn't want my father to die from cancer!

I've prayed oh so fervently for healing for so many of our church members!

I've prayed for broken homes to be mended!

...for old wounds to be healed

...for wrongs to be righted

...but not all those prayers were answered the way I wanted!

The bottom line is: GOD KNOWS BEST!

## 2. Praying Unselfishly

Praying unselfishly is submitting to His will...His authority!

Many of our prayers are "escape prayers"--not wanting to face some unpleasant situation; however, God helps us to accept what we cannot understand.

That marvelous "Serenity Prayer" is a perfect example of this... "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen."

When we pray unselfishly, God sends His answer--but the answer is always His...not necessarily ours.

## THE POWER OF PRAYING WITH OTHERS

When we gather with another for prayer Christ is with us! This ties together what we spoke about last Sunday about earth and heaven...

...we think of earth being here

...heaven being up there

...earth being present

...heaven being future

But as believers we are citizens of two worlds!

...we belong to earth

...we live in a world of space and time  
...we experience events all around us  
However, the Bible teaches that we are also a citizen of God's Kingdom...  
...we now live "in" Christ  
...Christ now lives "in" us  
Therefore, the Kingdom of God is now...and the Kingdom of God is future!  
...and when we gather with others...God is with us...because Christ is in us  
...God hears our prayers  
...and God answers our prayers  
There's incredible power in praying together.

#### CONCLUSION

The most important single factor in effective prayer is that the person praying be in a right relationship with God.  
...NOT my will!  
...but, as we pray EVERY Sunday: "Thy Kingdom come...Thy will be done...on earth as it is in Heaven!"  
Finally, pray with faith...believing and trusting God!  
Believe that Christ loves you more than you love yourself!  
Believe that all power and authority are His...and He has extended that to you.  
Believe/visualize God is right there with you when you pray.