

PRAYER SERIES #3
BEING CONFIDENT
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Today we will reinforce what we have learned over the last two weeks.

Number 1: God is never the problem.

Number 2: The prayer that changes things.

Our picture of God had to be accurate. If our beliefs about God are not true ... the wrong concepts will cause us problems.

Do we pray ... then when we don't seem to get the answer ... we pray longer ... and louder ... then we send out emails asking others (complete strangers) to take up my cause with God. Then the ultimate ... **FAST!**

Do we need to pray all night long? Do we need to "storm the gates of Heaven" ... do we have to pray "until we get through"? The whole underlying concept there is ... **GOD IS THE PROBLEM ... HE'S NOT PREPARED TO ANSWER US.**

We need to "get through to God" to get His attention!!

James 1:5-8

" **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach,** and it will be given to him. But let him **ask in faith, with no doubting,** for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

We can go to the scriptures to find out God's will. For some unknown spiritual reason ... is God reluctant? Looking at the above verse, it doesn't seem so. Don't blame God. Are we asking in faith? Are we doubting? God is not the problem ... It's us!!

IF WE ARE NOT ASKING IN FAITH, WE WILL NOT RECEIVE!!

Doubt and do without!!

Mark 6:1-6

Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." Now **He could do no mighty work there**, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. **And He marveled because of their unbelief.** Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching."

Jesus wanted to do many mighty works, but He couldn't ... BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF!! UNBELIEF STOPPED HIM. They had no faith.

Could this illustration apply to us today? Does Jesus marvel at our unbelief. Frankly, shouting louder and louder won't make up for unbelief.

Jesus wanted to heal ... without exception. That is the nature of God, the nature of Jesus.

Psalms 145:8-9

" **The Lord is gracious and full of compassion,** (God's disposition is to show favour)

Slow to anger and **great in mercy.**

The Lord is good to all,

And **His tender mercies are over all His works."**

2 Chronicles 16:7-9

And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, (trusted in the flesh) and have not relied on the Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand. For **the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.** In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."

Psalms 34:11-15

" Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of The Lord (Hear and obey)
Who is the man who desires life, (Chofetz Chaim)
And loves many days, that he may see good?
Keep your tongue from evil, (Watch your words!!)
And your lips from speaking deceit.
Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.

**The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their cry."**

Psalms 34:15 NET BIBLE

" The Lord pays attention to the godly
and hears their cry for help."

Matthew 6:5-8

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray,

do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

"Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."

Is it the quantity of words that impresses God. "Don't babble on and on like the pagans who think that God will hear them better if they talk a lot". (Complete Jewish Bible)

1 Kings 18:17-40

" Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

Elijah's Mount Carmel Victory

So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God."

So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it."

So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O

Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." (Elijah's prayer was about 20 seconds!)

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!"

So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there."

Just a reminder that it's not the length or volume of our prayers or the number of people that we have added to our prayer chain. We don't need to arm-wrestle God into doing something for us.

1 John 5:14-15

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that **if we ask anything (for ourselves) 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."

Ephesians 5:17

" Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Hebrews 4:11-16

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, (**WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST WHO CAN BE TOUCHED WITH OUR**

INADEQUACIES) but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 4:16 AMPLIFIED BIBLE

" Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favour to us sinners), that

we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].

Where in those verses, is there any mention of "storming the gates of Heaven"?

Hebrews 10:19-22

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Hebrews 10:22 AMPLIFIED BIBLE

" Let us all come forward and draw near with true (honest and sincere) hearts in unqualified assurance and absolute conviction engendered by faith (by that leaning of the entire human personality on God in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness), having our hearts sprinkled and purified from a guilty (evil) conscience and our bodies cleansed with pure water."

What about the woman whose daughter was demonised? "I'm like the Syro-Phoenician woman" ... she is a gentile, a stranger cut off from the covenants.

Matthew 15:21-28

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (This was not her time. She was part of the uncircumcised Gentile nations).

Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered and said to her, "**O woman, great is your faith!** Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour."

The only 2 people of great faith that Jesus mentioned were none Israelites ... this lady and the Roman Centurion.

Genesis 18:16-33

Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. And the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." And the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."

Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Abraham was very bold towards God).

So the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?"

So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it."

And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?"

So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty."

Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty."

Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?"

And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." So the Lord went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place."

There is no evidence that God was displeased with Abraham's boldness. God wasn't upset with that. Our prayers should be more along the lines of a conversation with God. We don't have to plead or beg God. (The word, "beg" only appears once in the New Testament ... and that wasn't referring to God). And the word, "plead" ... doesn't appear at all.

What about the word, "supplication"?

Philippians 4:4-7

" Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by **prayer and supplication**, with **thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Prayer is generally talking about the conversation that we have with God. "Supplication" always includes a request for something ... we are looking for something specific. "With thanksgiving" ... knowing that we will get our requests answered. (See I John 5:14-15).

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

" Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (Never stop praying ... pray continually ... pray a lot).

God answers prayers of faith!!

Matthew 21:21-22

" So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

We can always come boldly to The Throne of Grace and Favour ... knowing we will always receive help.

Our part is merely to come ... and believe ... NOT to storm the gates of Heaven.