

January 29, 2023

Faith in Prayer II, Mark 11:20-24

By Aaron Shamp

Introduction

- How often do our prayers feel forced? Without power? Without confidence?
 - We go to God out of obligation but do not leave feeling refreshed. We do not approach with the assurance that he will supply our every need.
- We are continuing to explore what it means to have *faith in God* when we pray.
 - *It means that we believe that God really hears us and will answer us.*
 - If we look carefully then we can perceive the essential qualities for success in prayer.

Faith Has An Aim

- First, there should always be some *definite objects* for which we pray. Christ speaks of bringing specific needs before God.
 - We often do not really receive from God what we desire or need because we don't consider what we should ask before we pray.
 - You wouldn't try to enter a royal court and then decide what to ask for after you get there. An archer shooting his bow wouldn't be successful if he didn't know where his mark is. A ship on voyage wouldn't discover anything if the captain didn't know what they were looking for.
 - Spurgeon also urges that we be specific in prayers for people and other needs:
 - "When you pray to Him, tell Him what you want. If you have not money enough, if you are in poverty, if you are in straits, state the case. Use no mock modesty with God. Come at once to the point, speak honestly with Him. He needs no beautiful periphrasis such as men will constantly use when they don't like to say right out what they mean. If you need either a temporal or spiritual mercy, say

so. Don't ransack the Bible to find out words in which to express it. Express your wants in the words which naturally suggest themselves to you. They will be the best words, depend upon it... Name persons, name things, and make a straight aim at the object of your supplications, and I am sure you will soon find that the weariness and dullness of which you often complain in your intercessions, will no more fall upon you, or at least not so habitually as it has heretofore done."¹

- Do you have no specific needs for yourself?
 - Well, you can always surely pray for greater faith and greater love for Christ.
 - You can also inquire of the needs of others so that you might pray for them.
 - You can pray for our city.

Faith Has Earnest Desire

- Second, is *earnest desire*. We desire what God desires and experience a fullness of that in our prayers.
 - We should pray with such desire that we continue in prayer for our object until God answers.
 - Spurgeon: "We must have such a desire for the thing we want, that we will not rise until we have it—but in submission to His divine will, nevertheless. Feeling that the thing we ask for cannot be wrong, and that He Himself hath promised it, we have resolved it must be given, and if not given, we will plead the promise again, and again, till heaven's gates shall shake before our pleas shall cease."²
 - Perhaps many of our prayers have not been answered because we have not been fervent in prayer. Dispassionate requests do not move men's hearts, why should they move God's?
 - Even the Lord's prayer has a clear outline with definite request. When definite objects and fervent prayer mix together we have the hope of our prayers being answered.

Faith Has Expectation

- Lastly, a *realizing expectation* should always go with firm faith.
 - We frequently pray and then have to wait. If only we knew what God was doing. He is beginning to answer your prayer in a way that you cannot comprehend.
 - Consider Daniel who was distressed and praying but had to wait three weeks (Daniel 10).
 - An expectation that God hears us and will answer us in request for both spiritual and temporal needs is an expression of uncommon faith.
 - We are not demanded entitlements; rather, we are practicing belief in our God who is rich in mercies.

End Notes

¹ Charles Spurgeon, “True Prayer—True Power!” Sermon #328, Volume 6, spurgeongems.org., 2-3.

² Ibid., 3.