**Ask Anything In Jesus’ Name**

Based on [John 16:23-33](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn16.23-33)

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In this gospel, Jesus promises his disciples that whatever they ask of the Father in his name, he will give it to them. This is a bold statement, and we must not take it lightly. These words are the greatest assurance and proof that God provides for and preserves his people. Jesus calls his disciples out of the world and says, “***Don’t worry…the world promises you much but it is passing away and cannot deliver. I have sanctified you and made you holy, I will send you my Spirit who will guide you in all truth, so that when I am gone, you will need to ask nothing of me, for you will know and understand my doctrine in your heart. And I am sending you out as sheep among wolves, but take heart, anything you need, ask my Father, who is your Father because of me, and he will provide you what you ask.”***

One of the most egregious false teachings of Christendom today is a failure to understand this passage and a shamelessly shallow teaching of it. It has been called the “word of faith” heresy…and it is this: “*The reason God exists is to give you whatever you really want. Like a genie in a bottle, he is waiting around in heaven for you to rub his lamp. And the way you rub his lamp is say this magic formula, “In the Name of Jesus.” Do you need a bigger house, a nicer car to impress the world, a bigger church building with a coffee bar so that people who see it will know you know how to ask god for things? Well ask for what you want, then say “In Jesus Name” and you will get it. And if you don’t, it’s not because I’m a false teacher, it’s because you didn’t believe enough that he would give it to you. So believe harder and he will give it to you. Just look at me, it worked for me.”*

This is why Stephen Furtick needs a 16,000 square foot mansion. Why Creflo Dollar needs a $65 million private jet. It’s why Benny Hinn has been investigated by the IRS…that doesn’t happen to disciples that only have a staff and a tunic to their name. It’s why churches in their newsletters can only talk about good things, or about bad things getting better, and why they need a building and a budget beyond their means. It’s why Rome needed money, money, money to build St. Peter’s Bascillica on the alms of starving peasants. If your theology says “*I know the way to make God give me what I ask for”…* then you must be successful or you have no credibility. So those seeking wealth will seek a wealthy minister; those seeking a successful life in the world will seek a church that is successful in the world. They have received their reward.

Their impulse is half right. People need someone who has it good with God before God will listen to them. God will not listen to just anybody. “**For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil**” (1 Pe 3:12). “**The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous**” (Proverbs 15:29). Can God answer the prayer of the wicked? Of course he *can*. But he does not promise to. It is a shot in the dark for the unbeliever to pray to God, which ought to make their cries to him all the more desperate. Instead, when he gives them bread they ask for caviar.

In the OT lesson God’s people grumble against God and Moses. “**For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food” Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And te people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us**.”

The sinner and grumbler knows he has no right to ask anything of God. It appears that they forgot about their hunger when confronted with the punishment for sin**.** As sinners they have no standing with God, but James tells us “**The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working**” (James 5:16). **The Israelites knew they had sinned, and so they turned to Moses--one who does God’s will--to ask him to pray to God to spare them his wrath.** Moses listened and prayed, and God answered Moses. And he gave him instructions for a sacrament, a visible tangible sign to take away their sin. He instructed Moses to elevate a bronze serpent on a pole, so that anyone who would look upon it would live.

This event--some 1500 years before Jesus---prefigured what would happen when Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Jesus has said, “**And I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men to myself.**” So this very night that he promised his disciples that his Father will give them whatever they ask—**that same night he instituted the Lords Supper, so that every time we gather and celebrate it we behold our sin on the cross and proclaim the Lord’s Death until he comes**. Here, with eyes of faith, we look upon the fruits of the cross wherein Christ was lifted up, and he gives us his body and blood, and the forgiveness, life and salvation we ask.

The heretics and fanatics are half-right. God only promises to listen to the righteous. **But they are wrong to think that mansions, personal jets, and whitewashed newsletters are signs of righteousness and God’s approval.**  Rather they are signs of covetousness, worldliness…treasures built up on earth and empty pantries in heaven. They grumble for better food while neglecting to pray for healing of their covetous hears and malnourished souls. “**You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people. Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?”** (James 4:3-4).

Yet even for the worldly there is hope. **If they would turn to Jesus, and say “I have sinned against the Father and against you. Pray that he take away my sin from me.**” If they would only ask, they would receive. That is the only hope for the unrighteous, those who are lost in sin, who have neglected their souls for worldly pursuits. They are children of the world. But Jesus has come into the world to advocate for them. John writes, “**My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**.” Jesus intercedes for sinful man before the Father, he is the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through him.

Jesus says something amazing in this gospel. He says to his disciples, “**In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you**.” “In that day”…what day? In the day that he is risen from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father. **In *that* day, they will not ask Jesus for anything because they have been taught to pray “Our Father who art in heaven” and have promised to be granted what they ask in Jesus’ Name.**

When a father has a child, he wants to give every good thing to his son. He wants him to have everything, but he doesn’t give his son everything right away. A child, before he is instructed in the way he should go, will only spend what he is given on his own passions and desires. No, first the father raises the son in the way he should go, instructs him what life is about, what money is for, why he is given daily breath and what he should spend his time doing. We live in an age of extended adolescence, when thirty something’s still don’t know what they want to do with their life. And mom and dad continue to pour money into the vacuum of their aimless and fickle ambitions until they’ve tried everything under the so and accomplished nothing. Don’t be afraid to tell your children what they should do, what they should want. Don’t make them do what their not good at, but nurture the talents god has given them so they can put them to his service someday. There is not a good parent out there who wouldn’t give their responsible adult child anything he asks for, because he will use it responsibly and wisely, not selfishly and scandalously.

Likewise, when an owner gives management over to someone, he gives him lots of discretion. Different offices and committees in the government are given budgets to spend tax dollars. Anything they ask to do their job, it is given them. This is why it’s so scandalous when ministers use tax dollars on their own vacations and useless frolics. Taxpayers, for the most part, would complain so much about high taxes if the money wasn’t wasted on things outside of the government’s mandate, like painting rainbows on crosswalks for instance.

So to God the Father is promised to the twelve and to all disciples who ask in his son’s name. His son has called them, and he calls you. He has instructed them, as he has instructed you. **He warns them that in the world they will have tribulation, and you will have tribulation in the world.** But whatever you need to carry out his commands, ask his Father and he will give it to you. He first instructs you with his word, calls you to a life of holiness, and in that day you will know how to ask in Jesus’ Name, because you will be serving him and he does not expect you to make bricks without straw. **It is his father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom**, and **the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spririt** (Romans 14:17).

Love God and your neighbor, and if you have trouble doing that ask God and he will give it to you. Ask for patience he will give it. Ask for self-control he will give it. Pray directly to the Father, and ask for a kind heart that loves your enemies and prays for those who persecute you—as Jesus has commanded you--and he will provide. **Is your neighbor going to hell? ask God to give you courage to reason frankly with them.** Are you being slandered because you spoke the truth in love? ask God for a peaceful conscience to not grow weary in suffering for doing good.

Are you arrogant? ask for humility. Are you starving ask for daily bread. Are you starving and not receiving daily bread, ask for contentment, and peace and joy in the heart to bear your cross, as Christ bore your sins to the cross and from there gives you the fruit of his salvation.

**“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”**