**Whatever You Ask of the Father**

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

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The Sixth Sunday of Easter ~

Rogate

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Prayer is a basic human instinct. When things get bad; when there is no worldly help to be afforded; when all seems lost…everyone’s heart, if not their mouth, cries out to heaven for help. It’s on account of the fact that everyone knows God as Creator and Judge, and that comes out instinctually in moments of desperation.

And this instinct for prayer is not wrong. But like most things, the Scriptures and Words of Jesus put prayer into the right perspective. He says to his disciples, “**In that day [*the time of his resurrection, his ascension and his sending of the Helper*], 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. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.**”

A preliminary comment on prayer. Jesus is not teaching that you can ask for “anything” in prayer. For instance, you cannot ask for evil in Jesus’ Name and expect God to give it to you. If your heart is set on murdering someone, or coveting what they have…God will not answer that prayer. So when Jesus says, “whatever you ask…He will give it to you” is either an exaggeration…which is fine. Or better yet, the clarity comes in the understanding of Jesus’ Name.

To ask in Jesus’ name doesn’t simply mean as a church-going Christian or as one whom mentions Jesus’ Name at the end of the prayer. In Jesus’ Name means according to Gods will. In Jesus Name means, in the Spirit of God…and no one in the Spirit prays for evil. Everyone in the Spirit prays for God’s will to be done. Every true Christian desires, above all else, salvation for themselves and all people. And everything you ask is entrusted to God that he would do what is best ***toward that end***. You may ask that God would end your suffering, take away your sickness, reform your spouse, so on. God may say *yes* and do it soon. He may say *yes,* or *not yet* and do it over the span of years, (wherein your sinful heart questions and doubts his sincere intention). Or God may say *no*, and if he says *no*, it is only because he knows a better way…a way that better serves the true end and goal, the preservation of your faith unto the salvation of your soul. In any case, God answers prayer, and gives what is truly asked for by his children.

Jesus also has some teachings on on *how to pray*. Something to consider about prayer is that Jesus disciples are encouraged to pray *directly to the Father*, just as though he is their own Father. A faithless prayer is a frightful prayer, because *it doesn’t believe that God really wants to hear it*. But when you believe that God is your Father, you can approach him with boldness, and confidence that he will hear you and wants to hear you.

The famous last words of Martin Luther were recorded to be “We are beggars, this is true”. And he was right, insofar as we come to God with nothing to offer him in exchange for his grace. His love is pure mercy, and he hears our prayers, not because of us, but for the sake of Christ. But the statement “we are beggars” is wrong if it is as though we are to come to God as burdensome strangers. We are sons and daughters of the King! We have a right to ask him. And if God seems to reject any of our petitions, he is not rejecting our prayers, or grudging of our asking him. God owes us his love, and we are worthy of his love when we believe and love his Son Jesus Christ.

For those who believe in Christ and love him, God *is* their Father, this is a powerful, assuring truth. To be a son and to have a Father is no small matter…it makes a difference. **If a child is lost in a crowd and starts crying people won’t just expect anyone to come and claim him. They will try and find the boy’s Father…and Mother**. A Father owes his son love, and guidance, and protection, and is responsible for finding him when lost. The boy never earned these things but he is *owed them* by the one he has the right to call “Father”.

So too, we are sons and daughters of God, the Father of Jesus Christ. Not by nature, but *by adoption through faith in him*. And when God is our Father, we can expect every good thing. Any earthly Father worthy of the title, would certainly teach and comfort and protect his son. But despite his best efforts he *might* fail. He might lose his Son due to his own weakness, or ignorance, or sin.

But God cannot fail. He always accomplishes his purposes, and his word was sent and will not return void. As long as you remain his Son, he will be your heavenly Father. As long as you affirm Christ, the Father will affirm you. As long as you look not to your own selfish, sinful desires and worldly passions; but lament of them and repent of them, struggle against them and trust in Christ; then his father is your Father.

But apart from faith in Jesus Christ, sinners don’t have the right to call God their Father. God will not listen to their prayers, he does not promise to hear those who deny his Son.

Someone might say that’s unfair, but it’s not. God made the law. We have all sinned and deserve hell. So God made a way for all people. He sent his son to win forgiveness and offer salvation.

We transgressed, he obeyed and so for the guilty, there is no salvation apart from Him. ***Is it so little a thing that God sacrificed his son for love of the world, that the world should demand salvation in some other name?*** What about other religions or even unreligious people? God isn’t going to listen to them just because they don’t acknowledge Jesus? Yes.

And it’s not that Jesus doesn’t offer himself to them…it’s that they refuse to befriend him, honour him as the Lord and God and Saviour that he is. He is the master who bought them, and they deny him. So they deny him, and he denies them before his Father in heaven.

But you who know him and love him, he is your Lord and Your God. You need not ask Jesus to ask the Father, you know he has already pleaded for you with his own blood. All you need to do is mention his name, and the Father who loves you will give you what Christ has promised. Forgiveness, life, salvation…a worthwhile cross in this life, and a crown for the next that you will cast down before the Lord of Glory.