

**THE IMPERFECT PRAYER LIFE AND THE DESIRE FOR COMMUNION WITH GOD - Part four - Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup> 2024 - 5:30 p.m.  
Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON**

**Hebrews 11:6 - "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."**

**Matthew 17:20 - "He said to them, 'Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.'" (See also Luke 17:5-10 for an expanded form of this teaching from Jesus.)**

**James 5:15 - "And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."**

The *importance* of faith in these texts is obvious. What is less obvious is what is *involved* in praying with that kind of faith? How can we *grow* in the exercise of faith in our prayers?

The key thought for today is *faith must have a foundation - an object in which trust is put*. What we will study today is the process through which the Holy Spirit intensifies our prayer times through such faith.

While it is true that, "**faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen**"(Hebrews 11:1), faith is *not* something which we "**work up**" in our own hearts when we know what we're trying to believe isn't really true. God is invisible, but left us reasonable "**assurance**" (or "**evidence**" KJV) for our confidence and trust in Him.

Today we will consider the **framework** on which the prayer of faith is constructed. There are several important components to praying with faith. We'll study three this week and more next Sunday.

#### 1) **THE DIRECT PROMISES OF GOD**

The Bible offers specific promises regarding our requests for **wisdom** (James 5:6), **physical healing** (James 5:15-16), **material needs** (Philippians 4:18-19), the giving of **inner peace** (Philippians 4:6-7), and more.

It is true there are specific **gifts** of faith and miracles for some needs - **1 Corinthians 12:8-9** - “**To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit....**” But God has **not** put the power of faith in prayer out of the reach of anybody. The Bible nowhere limits answers to prayer to those who have special gifts of faith. The gift of faith is a special **assurance** given to the one praying that God will intervene.

The capacity to pray with faith isn't limited only to a few. It can be increased or diminished. And one of the key factors in faith's increase is meditation on the promises of God's Word - **Romans 10:17** - “**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**”

And there are other sources for nourishing and increasing faith:

## 2) **GOD'S PASSION TO GLORIFY HIS NAME**

This is a well for the development of faith. In sheer volume it is one of the largest themes in the Word of God when it comes to His working among His people:

**1 Samuel 12:22 - "For the Lord will not forsake his people, *for his great name's sake*, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself."**

**2 Samuel 7:23 - "And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, *making himself a name* and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods?"**

**Isaiah 63:14 - "Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So you led your people, *to make for yourself a glorious name.*"**

**Psalm 106:7-8 - "Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the Sea, at the Red Sea. [8] Yet he saved them *for his name's sake*, that he might make known his mighty power."**

It was not long before people began to understand this was a powerful key to effective prayer:

See *Abraham* - Genesis 18:20-25 - "Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, [21] I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know." [22] So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. [23] Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? [24] Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? [25] *Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"*

See *Moses* - Exodus 32:9-14 - "And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. [10] Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." [11] But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? [12] *Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'?* Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. [13] Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.' " [14] And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

See *Joshua* - Joshua 7:8-9 - "O Lord, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! [9] For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. *And what will you do for your great name?"*

Even prayers for forgiveness are founded, not on our own worth or desperate cries for help, ***but on God's faithfulness to His own Name and reputation - Psalm 25:11*** - **“For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.”** See also **Psalm 79:9** - **“Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake!”**

This is a key point of remembrance. This is why we can have certainty of cleansing and forgiveness. If it depended on our worthiness we would never qualify. We could never have assurance. Our standing in redemption is not based on us. It is based on God and his faithfulness to His own name and reputation. That's why John says, **“I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake”**(1 John 2:12).

This is the rationale behind the way Jesus structured His instruction on prayer for His disciples in what we have come to call “the Lord’s prayer” - **David Piper - “Beginning with 'Hallowed by Thy Name,' and ending with 'In Jesus' name' meant that the glory of God's name was the goal and the ground of everything I prayed.”**

There’s a third foundation for the creation of faith by the Holy Spirit in prayer:

3) **MY HEEDING THE DIRECTION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN CONSCIENCE**

**1 John 3:21-22 - "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; [22] and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him."**

I *hear* God's voice in many ways, primarily through His Word, the Bible. But the *effect* of not obeying God when He speaks takes place in my inner being, in my heart and mind. It's my *confidence* that is shaken when His will is ignored or postponed. The *disobedience* may be *outward*, but the *effect* of that disobedience is *inward*. John says there is an immediate repercussion of it in my prayer life.

John is not saying God answers my prayers because of my moral perfection. What he's dealing with is my *faith*, my ability to pray with *trust* and *confidence*. In other words, I can't *earn* answers to prayer. But I can *forfeit* any possibility of praying in faith. And that will make genuine prayer an impossibility.