

The 4th Sunday in Lent ~ Sunday, March 11, 2018
“A House of Prayer ~ What About Unanswered Prayer”

Psalm 13

“You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!” (John 14:13-14)

“So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24)

“And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him.” (1 John 5:14-15)

These passages speak of the _____ that we can have when we come to God in prayer—the confidence that, when we pray, we aren’t just speaking into the _____, but to a person—a person is our Heavenly _____.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you, who if you child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him?” (Matthew 7:7)

This verse reveals to us something of God’s _____; and is a wonderful reminder of His desire to hear us when we pray and to give good gifts to His children. However, this doesn’t necessarily mean that all our prayers will be answered exactly as we’d _____.

“I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer; I stand up but you merely look at me.” (Job 30:20)

“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, ‘I have prevailed;’ my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.” (Psalm 13:1-4)

Despite the apparent _____, Scripture us clear: God is a perfect parent, and He loves to give us good gifts—all we have to do is ask. So the question is: What

do we do with _____ prayer?

Jesus doesn’t _____, so we can be certain that His words here are _____—so, what’s the problem? Why is it that we pray and don’t always get what we ask for? The fact that we don’t always get what we ask doesn’t negate Jesus’ _____; nor does it say something negative about God’s _____ or His love and _____ for us. God always _____ prayer.

“Call to me and I will answer you.” (Jeremiah 33:3)

4 WAYS GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

#1. God answers prayer by saying; _____!
“...how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?” (Matthew 7:11)

There are such things as _____ or _____ prayer requests.

Prayer isn’t just _____ to God—bringing our needs and wants to Him. Prayer is about seeking God’s _____ so that what’s happening in heaven will be done here on earth—in my life. Why? Because so often we don’t know or _____ God’s will for our lives. And when we don’t know God’s will, our prayers will be _____.

The disciples walked with Jesus—they knew Him _____; better than anyone else—and they were still capable of making _____ requests. Like those first disciples, we’re all capable of making _____ requests to God—sometimes with the best _____.

Can you relate to this? Has God ever said “No” to your prayers?

#2. God answers prayer by saying; _____!
Two most hated words in the English language—especially to little children—are:

We all hate those words. The child in all of us wants God to meet every _____, grant every request, move every _____, as soon as we ask.

It’s important for us to understand that God’s _____ are not necessarily God’s _____. He wants us to trust that He knows what He’s _____.

“‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’” (Isaiah 55:8)

No matter how hard we try to understand, the reality is, God's ways are infinitely _____ than our ways. We see in _____—in a mirror dimly, as Paul writes—but God sees in full; _____.

Can you relate? What have been the times when you have prayed for something and have had to wait for God's response—for the right time; the right situation; the right set of circumstances?

We think we know what's _____ for us and we all tend to _____ the answers to our own prayers. We think that God can come in only _____ way.

Scripture teaches us that God sometimes answers our prayers by allowing things to become much _____ before they become better. And He sometimes does the _____ of what we anticipate. Yet it's a fundamental principle in the life and walk of faith that we must always be prepared for the _____ when we are dealing with God.

Sometimes the issue is simply that we're not _____ ready for the answer—and time is required to develop _____, trust, endurance and character. God is more concerned with our _____ than our _____.

#3. God answers prayer by saying; _____!

There are times when our own _____, _____, or character is the problem and stand in the way of God granting the requests we seek.

“If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened...” (Psalm 66:18)

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.” (Matt 5:23-24)

“For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” (Psalm 34:15-16)

It's a lot easier to point the finger at God for not answering prayer than it is to look in the _____ and admit that maybe I'm the _____—that there might be something _____ God's response; that there's something I need to _____ in my heart or life to better position myself to receive from God.

Sometimes the _____ of God's grace in our lives can be blocked by our smoldering _____—from those things that we think we're _____ from God.

Can you relate? Has there been a time in your life, when God appeared

silent or wasn't answering your prayer because there was something in your heart or life that was out of alignment with His will or Word?

We need to be open to the _____ of the Spirit and be willing to change those areas within us that are not in line with God's _____. Only then, can God's _____ flow freely in and through us—and only then will we see the answer to prayer.

#4. God answers prayer by saying; _____!

God always wants what's _____ for us. And I doubt that many of us fully _____ just how badly He wants to touch that difficult situation or move that immovable _____ in our path.

When we pray and these three things line up, God says; “Yes!”:

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“Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of his highest willingness.”—Anonymous

“My responsibility is to pray, God's responsibility is to heal. If he chooses not to do so, then he's responsible for that.”—John Wimber

What has been your experience of answered prayer—when has God said; “Yes!” to your prayers?



God always _____ us when we pray and always _____.

“Before they call I will answer, while they are still yet speaking I will hear.” (Is 56:24)

If our prayers aren't answered, we can't _____ God, nor should we quit praying—we need to go _____—we need to look for the _____.

We see and know only a minute speck of what God sees and knows, and so we need to _____ in Him—in His goodness and love, and to seek to live in the tension of faith seeking understanding.

“But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.” (Psalm 13:5-6)

What is your attitude when you pray and don't get an immediate response or the answer you wanted? David was willing to trust God—are you?