

## In Jesus' Name?

**INTRODUCTION** – When we became believers, most of us would have been taught to pray and to end our prayers in Jesus' Name. However, the significance of and the reason why we have to end in Jesus' Name may not have been explained to us. Therefore, most of the time, when we pray the phrase "in Jesus' Name" is perfunctorily uttered without understanding. This does affect the manner in which we pray and the people around us who hear our prayers. Whether we end our prayers sloppily like regurgitating the phrase "in Jesus' Name" or think that it is just a standard utterance, the people who hear us will be stumbled.

Prayer is a very meaningful time that a child of God spends with his heavenly Father. It should evoke from the hearers a sense of deep solemnity and awe as they listen to a child of God crying out to his heavenly Father in real child-like faith. This is likened to listening to a child speaking with his father in all sincerity and without guile. There is a personal effect that can be felt and seen. This is what prayer ought to be. To accomplish this, we need to have a biblical understanding on why we must end our prayers "in Jesus' Name." With a proper understanding, we ought to stop saying "in Jesus' Name" perfunctorily and meaninglessly.

The following are four biblical reasons why we must always end our prayers in Christ's name:

- I. **Acknowledging Our Great High Priest – Hebrews 4:14-16** "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. **15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

No man can approach God without a Mediator, ever since the fall of man. Man is in sin. God is holy. Man needs to be cleansed of his sins before he can approach God. The sacrifice of Christ as the perfect Lamb of God is the only way anyone can approach God. All who reject Christ as their Lord and Saviour will not be permitted to approach God. This means that God will never hear the prayers of anyone who does not approach Him through Christ. God hears prayers not because of the severity of one's adversity. God hears prayers because of the relationship we have with Him. That relationship is the parent child relationship. Christ died for us so that we can become children of God. It is this relationship that enables us to pray and be heard by God. Born again believers and anyone else are not able and are not permitted by God to approach God on their own merits or status. This relationship was made possible through Christ alone, no one else! Christ has finished His salvific work on earth and has returned back to heaven from where He came. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. All believers are to hold fast, i.e. seize and never let go, our profession, i.e. calling ourselves Christians, because of the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, and our relationship is secured for eternity! Not even death or the Devil himself is able to take this away from us.

Whatever we experience on this earth, regardless of how painful, God wants us to know that Christ is touched by the feelings of our infirmities. He feels for us and has compassion for what we are enduring for Him. He has endured all that we can endure on this earth! All that we endure are based upon what our mortal earthen vessel experiences. The pain, hunger and the thirst that we experience for the sake of Christ as we witness for Him, He has experienced when He was on earth. He feels for us. But He did not sin when He endured the weakness of the flesh. Because of all that Christ endured and completed on the cross, all believers can approach God through Christ our great High Priest! When we go through trials, what we need most from God to help us through them is His grace and mercy in time of need. His grace is the good blessings that He gives that we do not deserve which will be sufficient for us. For example, when we are faced with imprisonment or even death, we will remember the promise of God that when we are absent

from the body we are present with Him in heaven. This gives us the strength we need to endure to the very end. We pray to God for this strength and He will give to us so that we will not sin. His mercies are what we also pray for after we have repented of our sin. For example, when we have to bear a consequence for sin committed, we plead with God for strength to endure to the end knowing that the chastisement could have been worse.

Christ is our Great High Priest before God all the days of our lives. He is our Mediator that allows us to approach God. Without Christ we can never approach God and bring our petitions to God. God will not hear us if we do not approach Him through Christ. That is why we must pray in Jesus' Name. This means that at the end of our prayer we are saying to God that we have asked and brought before Him our petitions through our Great High Priest who has entered into heaven. It must be said prayerfully and meaningfully all the time because we must always pray meaningfully.

This passage of the Bible sums up well what we have been discussing. **Hebrews 2:14-18** "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; **15** And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. **16** For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. **17** Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. **18** For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." [Emphasis added]

Christ is able to help if only we would ask.

**II. Receiving Power in Service – John 14:12-14** "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. **13** And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14** If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

When we ask in Christ's Name, the work that God wants us to do on this earth after Christ's resurrection will be blessed by God. He will give to us whatever we need on this earth that will ensure success and victory! No believer ought to fail because all that we do will be granted to us by God because we asked in Christ's Name. The works that Christ did on earth we will also do on earth. In fact, Christ's said that His disciples will do greater works than the works that He did on earth. In what sense can the disciples' work be greater than Christ's? It has to be the scope of the work. Christ's work was limited and located to only the Land of Promise. He was sent to bring the Truth to the Jews only. The disciples would bring the gospel to the rest of the world beginning with the Jews and then to the rest of the world. Christ has left behind the extent of the gospel to the disciples which include all of us. The reason is that Christ has to return to the Father. His mission from the Father was completed.

The service also includes provoking other brothers and sisters in Christ to love and to more good works. These are the services that God wants us to pray to Him for help to complete successfully. It is all spiritual work. We cannot do it alone. We need God's help greatly. Based upon the fact that we are doing God's work on this earth, Christ has promised all believers that whatsoever we ask in order to accomplish these works will be granted. Therefore it is not for wilful, selfish and man-centred requests. It is to do God's work that this guarantee is promised! The phrase "that the Father may be glorified in the Son" is the basis for this conclusion. All things that pertain to us and man will not glorify God the Father through Christ. However, all things spiritual and in Christ

will definitely glorify God the Father. We are serving God on earth where Satan is the god of this world (cf. 2 Cor 4:4). He has blinded the eyes of many. Only God can open the eyes of these blind souls. Therefore praying to God when we share the gospel to open their eyes is Christ's work. That is why when we ask in Christ's Name, Christ will get it done for us, i.e. save the ones we share the gospel with and help brothers and sisters in Christ to grow in the Lord. Heart transformation to Christ-likeness is always God's work.

This is similar to what Christ also said in **John 15:16-17** "**16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.* **17** These things I command you, that ye love one another." – We have been saved to do good works. These good works must glorify God through Christ. They must not be "good" works in themselves where Christ and God are not the focus. If they are not the focus then they would not be called good works.

Only believers can do good works. It begins with election whereby God has determined what we will do for Him after salvation. We did not choose God. He has chosen us and made and formed us the way we are. The purpose is to bring forth fruit. These are good works that believers do that will point sinners to the Saviour and help other believers become better believers.

In service, we need God's help all the time. The service we do is always spiritual and has to do with the heart. Asking God in Christ's Name is to do so with Christ's authority and through Him as our Mediator.

**III. Experience Fullness of Joy – John 16:23-27** "**And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24** Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. **25** These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. **26** At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: **27** For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

What day was Christ referring to in verse 23? Christ was referring to the day that He mentioned in the previous verse. **John 16:22** "**And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.**" That day is the day of Christ's resurrection. He appeared to them and they did not ask Him anything, for what He shared with them regarding His death and resurrection gave them the hope they needed. Their faith in Christ was assured in that Christ has overcome death and defeated the Devil on our behalf.

However, after the ascension of Christ they would have their own ministry such as starting the local church witness for Christ and they would face many challenges. Then they would pray without ceasing. So Christ taught them to ask God the Father in Christ's Name and He would give it to them. In this way, when they experience the presence of God through answered prayers their joy will be full. Knowing God through the study of God's Word is good. It fills the believer's mind with thoughts of God. But to complete this experience, God wants us to obey His Word in life so that theory will turn into experience. The disciples had experienced the love and promises of God in their lives! This is the joy that is full and rich which money cannot buy and comes only through experience and trust via prayer. Having our prayers answered helps us to be conscious of the presence of God in our lives. This is joy unspeakable.

Not only that, when we pray in Christ's Name, we also experience the reality of the love of God. When prayers are heard and answered we know that God loves us because He succours us in our time of need. He continues to keep watch over us, which is what a person who loves someone will always do. He protects and provides. Christ prays for us and the Father answers Him through whose Name we have made our request. For example, we pray for God to protect our children whenever they travel or to help them in their studies so that they will learn to trust God more through their studies. Then we see the change in our children's lives. They are kept safe in their going out and coming in daily. They pray more when they struggle through their studies. We are encouraged to pray even more and live a holy life more knowing God loves us by hearing us. The reality of God's presence becomes more meaningful through more of such experiences.

### **APPLICATION**

The phrase "in Jesus' Name" is not a magic formula to be uttered by anyone so that God has no choice but to answer. Not everyone who says this or that in Jesus' Name is a child of God. God will only hear the cry of His children who know that it is only through Christ that they can approach God in everything including their petitions in prayer. Christ is the only Mediator between God and man. He is the believer's great High Priest. To acknowledge Christ in our prayers is to acknowledge to God that we are approaching Him only through the merits of Christ and never our own.

"In Jesus' Name" we draw strength and power from God in service. God will help us and hear us when we cry to Him for help. Without Christ helping us no one can serve God acceptably. It is also in Jesus' Name that we experience the fullness of joy. We turn our theoretical knowledge of God into experiential knowledge. In this way our joy is full and complete, for we have turned head knowledge into heart knowledge.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Do you think that the Chairman at worship services must always pray in Jesus' Name? If he does not, will you be stumbled? Please elaborate.
2. In group prayer, is it necessary for every member to end in Jesus' Name, or do you think it is the last person who prays who ought to end in Jesus' Name? Share your reasons.
3. Is the prayer of a newly born again believer heard by God when he does not understand the meaning of praying in Jesus' Name and just did so mechanically because he was told to do so? Explain your answer.
4. Is it necessary to always end our prayers in Jesus' name? What if you are praying silently to God in your quiet moments and you pray as if you are talking to God in a series of a few short prayers over a period of one hour? Is it necessary to say "in Jesus Name" after every short and single prayer? Explain please.