

Title: The Petition We Desire of Him
Text: I John 5: 13-15
Date: March 8, 2018
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Having recently witnessed God answer our prayers for Ravi and Debbie with Chloe, the subject of prayer has been on my heart a great deal. If God will enable me, in the coming weeks I would like to preach a few messages concerning what scripture teaches about prayer, which the Lord has verified through this latest trial. This time we will see from scripture what we have experienced most recently.

1 John 5: 13: These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. 14: And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

The apostle John tells us to whom he wrote this epistle—*“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.”* This epistle applies to believers. The things we see here concerning prayer, applies to those who believe on the name of the Son of God.

Then he gives his first purpose for writing this epistle—*“that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”* John wrote this epistle, so every believer may not only believe on the Son of God, *but might know that ye have eternal life.* And that you might press on persevering in faith having all your confidence in Christ alone. I want every believer here to get this settled in our hearts: if you have Christ—believing on the name of the Son of God to save you, with all your confidence in Christ apart from any contribution on your part—then you have eternal life as God’s free gift of grace in his Son.

1 John 5: 11: And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
12: He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

This is important because the more confident we are that we have eternal life in Christ, the more confident we will be of this next thing John wants us to know, that the Lord hears our prayer. Notice the connection between confidence in Christ for salvation and confidence in Christ hearing our prayer—*“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”* Unless, I have confidence in Christ for salvation, I cannot be confident that God will hear my prayers. But the more our confidence of salvation is in Christ, the more we have confidence in Christ that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

The last thing John wants us to know is this—*“And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*

Title: The Petition We Desire of Him

Proposition: The chief petition we desire of God is that his will be done. God hears the prayer of his child when we ask *according to his will.* Therefore, when that is our chief petition, whatsoever we ask, we know we have the petitions that we desire of him because God always does his will.

CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST

1 John 5: 14: And this is the confidence that we have in him,...

First, confidence to approach Christ in prayer begins with confidence that Christ is my salvation. The unbelieving man shall receive nothing from God because he does not ask in faith, that is, with confidence in Christ his salvation.

James 1: 5: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6: But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7: For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

But those who believe on Christ for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption have confidence in Christ our Salvation.

Hebrews 13: 5...he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6: So that we may boldly say, [with confident faith] The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

The Holy Spirit has taught us in the new heart that by Christ's one offering he perfected forever all them that God sanctified by divine election so that there is no more offering for sin. Our sins have been put away by Christ Jesus. We can come to God with confidence in Christ through faith in him.

Hebrews 10: 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness [confidence of faith] to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21: And *having* an high priest over the house of God; 22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

The first thing the child of God does when God gives him life and faith in Christ is pray. Christ calmed Ananias fears of Saul, saying, "*Behold, he prayeth.*" (Acts 9: 11) The publican in Christ's parable did what? He prayed, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" (Lu 18: 13) From then on the believer prays to Christ with confidence in him alone—prayer is a state of being with the believer. We "*pray without ceasing*" because we depend upon Christ every hour. (1 Thess 5: 17) Christ said, "*All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*" (Mt 21:22).

When Christ is your confidence of salvation then you have the confidence to come to his throne of grace for help in time of need. If you have not done so, cast all your care on Christ! Put all your confidence in Christ for salvation. "*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life.*"

THE LORD WILL HEAR US

1 John 5: 14: And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

Knowing Christ ever lives to make intercession for us, our confidence in Christ is that he will hear us. Notice the qualifier—"if we ask anything according to his will." This applies to this verse and the next. Christ taught us,

Matthew 6: 9: After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

But it is more than simply saying "*Thy will be done.*"

One, asking according to God's will, is to come to God our Father in the name of Christ our Mediator—because this is God's will. We pray in Christ's name by praying in Christ's authority as our High Priest, our Mediator, our Intercessor. We come to God in Christ's name trusting his righteousness and shed blood for our acceptance with God in his holy place.

Two, asking according to God's will, is to pray with a heart in submission to God's will. The believer is to submit to God's revealed will in his word. There are some things scripture teaches us that we can pray specifically for because we know it is God's will: for a brother afflicted, for a brother who is sick, for a brother fallen into sin, for God's preacher to speak with boldness and for the gospel to go forth effectually, for example. (Jam 5: 13-16; Eph 6: 18-20)

But there are things concerning God's will which are hidden, such as God's will in providence. Yet, we are in submission to God's secret will in providence. The new heart given by the Spirit of God is broken and contrite heart in submission to God. So our desire is for God's will alone to be done for his glory in all things. We surrender all to God's will, knowing God's will is right and best at all times.

Now, at times we pray in our flesh, asking for that which is not according to God's will, but for our own fleshly desires. James said, "*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*" (Jas 4:3) But even then God hears his child because through the Spirit, through Christ our Intercessor, our petition is presented to God according to God's will.

Romans 8: 26: Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27: And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Hebrews 7:25: Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Since there is so much that we do not know what to pray for as we ought, I love the message that Mary and Martha sent to Christ concerning Lazarus, "*He whom thou lovest is sick.*" (Jn 11: 3) That was it. They based their petition on Christ's love. And left it with him. Brethren, the wisest thing for us to do is to lay our petition before God, asking his will be done and leave it with him.

When one of our little children comes to us, though he may not know what to ask for, though he may ask for things he should not ask, we hear him, why? He is our son looking to us to do what is best. God always hears his child in Christ who asks for God's will to be done. "*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*"

WE HAVE OUR PETITION

1 John 5: 15: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Not only does God hear us when we ask according to his will, but when we ask according to his will we know that we have our petitions we desired of him.

This is not what the vain religious world says about it. We are not talking about God giving new cars and new houses and riches just for the asking.

The point of this passage is that if we ask anything according to God's will then we know, whatever we ask, *we have*, right then, our petitions. It is because God's will shall be done.

From eternity, God predestinated all things for his people in Christ according to his will. He predestinated the hour when each of his elect shall be given the Spirit of adoption, "*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...*" (Eph 1: 5) God our Father predestinated our redemption at Calvary and wicked men with wicked hands did what God determined before to be done—and Christ redeemed us by his blood. (Acts 4: 27-28) He sent us the gospel by his will, "*Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.*" (Eph 1: 9) By the will of God we have been freely given an inheritance in heaven, "*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*" (Eph 1: 11) The point is, nothing shall change God's will.

Isaiah 46: 9: Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me. 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11...yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.

Why pray then? Be sure to get this! God uses the means of prayer to make his child submit to God's will. He makes us ask that God's will be done! Notice, in Ezekiel 36, all of this is what God predestinated and brings to pass according to his will:

Ezekiel 36: 25: Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26: A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27: And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*. 28: And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. 30: And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen....36: Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined *places*, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*.

But catch this next verse:

Ezekiel 36: 37: Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet *for* this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do *it* for them;...

Men say, "Pray changes things." It does not change God's will. Prayer is God making his people submit our will to God's will. "*And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask*"—according to his will—"we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." When we ask God's will be done in whatsoever it is we ask, then we know the moment we ask it, we have the petitions we desired of him because God's will shall be done.

Brethren, all of us asked God's will be done toward little Chloe. *Our will* was that he heal her. But when we asked we said, "*Thy will be done.*" Since our desire was God's will be done, we had our petitions that we desired right then. Because God's will is the only thing God does! She is better because it is God's will! And now we pray with the same fervency thanking God for hearing us and doing his will.

But what if it had been God's will *not* to heal her? It would have been right and best. And God would have given us grace to submit to his will.

If what we ask what is not God's will, God will not give his child what we ask. But by God doing *his will*, God makes us submit to his will. He teaches us what is best. And by doing so, he gives us what we really want and brings us to rejoice in it. Take the apostle Paul for example:

2 Corinthians 12: 7: And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8: For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9: And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10: Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

If God had granted Paul Paul's will, Paul would have been puffed up in pride of his flesh from the abundance of the revelations God gave him. He would not have learned the sufficiency of God's grace. Paul would not have learned that when he is weak then is he strong in Christ. But by God doing his will, by God not giving Paul what he prayed for, Paul found much greater rejoicing in Christ! And that is what we really want!

Sometimes you young people set your affection on things your parents give you like a video game. You become so glued to it that you cease showing your parents reverence when they call for you to do your chores. So your parents take away the video game. Then you beg to have it back just like we ask God to give us something our flesh wants. But your father knows that you do not really want that video game more than what you really want in your heart. So your father does not give you what you ask for. And by not giving you what you asked for, he gave you what you really want, a faithful, loving father who always does what is best for you. So it is with God. The Psalmist said,

Psalm 66: 18: If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*: 19: *But* verily God HATH heard *me*; he HATH attended to the voice of my prayer. 20: Blessed *be* God, which hath NOT turned away my prayer, nor HIS MERCY from me.

If I regard iniquity in my heart when I am asking God for that which my flesh wants, God will not hear, that is, he will not give me the lust of my flesh. But by not giving me the lust of my flesh God has heard me. He has attended to the voice of my prayer and has given me what I really want, a faithful heavenly Father. So in the end God brings us to thank him and praise him, saying, "*Bless be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*"

By giving us his will, rather than our will, God gives us what we really want though it may be totally different from what we asked. But by giving us God's will, it is always much better than what we asked. Christ said,

Luke 11: 11: If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he* ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 12: Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13: If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Consider our Lord Jesus Christ. In the garden of Gethsemane our Lord Jesus asked in faith, he asked aright and he asked in the right spirit when he prayed, "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (Mt 26: 39) And God our Father did what God was willing to do. He did not make the cup pass from our Substitute. Instead, he made him sin for his elect, made him a

curse for us and redeemed all his people from our sins. God our Father answered our Lord's petition and did what our Substitute prayed for, *"thy will be done."* Was it best, believer? Indeed! God glorified his name in the salvation of his people by the sacrifice of his Son! And that is what our Savior wanted!

Knowing that the prayer God hears and grants is that which is according to his will, it helps us understand all the promises of God concerning prayer such as these:

1 John 3: 22: Whatever we ask, we receive of him.

John 14: 13: And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Believer, do you always want to know you have the petition that you desire of God? Then whatsoever you ask, ask God to work his will! The petition we desire of him is "Thy will be done!" *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."*

Our God and heavenly Father, hears us always in Christ our Intercessor. He knows what is best for our souls, for His glory, and therefore he does his will. By always doing his will, he always gives us what we really want, a faithful heavenly Father!

Amen!