

“If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14).

# Praying in Jesus’ Name

by J. Wayne Kilpatrick

**I**T makes no sense at all to pray unless one prays in Jesus’ name! We have all attended sporting events and civic engagements and heard a prayer which was not prayed in Jesus’ name. One minister was asked to lead a prayer at a high school commencement. The principal wanted to have him submit the prayer in written form for his approval. When the minister asked him why he wanted a written copy, he replied, “The committee has voted unanimously to omit the name of Jesus so the Jews present would not be offended.” He told the principal that he could not pray to God and deliberately omit the name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said,

And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:13, 14).

And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name: ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf (John 16:23, 24, 26).

## I. VERSES WHICH AFFIRM IT

Over and over again in the Scriptures we read, “In My name,” “In Jesus’ name,” or “In His name.”

The use of the name of Jesus began while He was here on earth. Luke said, “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases” (Luke 9:1). They came back later filled with joy because, “even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” Many other verses stress the use of His name.

Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and, whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; . . . (Luke 9:48).

And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover (Mark 16:17, 18).

Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father (Ephesians 5:20).

But Peter said, “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!” (Acts 3:6).

And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; . . . let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health (Acts 3:16; 4:10).

"But in order that it may not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name." And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:17, 18).

For "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

... but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Many other references to His name exist, but I will summarize this truth by reminding you of the words of Paul in Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Frederick Whitfield wrote in 1855:

There is a name I love to hear,  
I love to sing its worth;  
It sounds as music to mine ear,  
The sweetest name on earth.

Oh, how I love Jesus,  
Oh, how I love Jesus,  
Oh, how I love Jesus,  
Because He first loved me.

I greatly fear that only a few of us have any idea as to what it means to operate in the name of Jesus.

While there are far-reaching implications of the name of Jesus, we are mainly concerned about the privilege of praying in His name. He has invited, urged, and commanded us to pray in His name. What does it mean to be able to pray in the name of Jesus?

Whatever it means to pray in the name of Jesus, I am confident that it involves more than words. No magic formula attaches to an assembly of words credibility with the Father. I am convinced that many of us have ended our prayers with "in Jesus' name" without really praying in His name. To pray in Jesus' name is more than a *declaration*; it is a *disposition*. Do you remember the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:17? We are in Christ by virtue of our new birth (John 3:5). Being in Christ and having Him in us makes us more apt to seek His way and less apt to seek ours. A basic understanding of what it means to pray in Jesus' name will not only serve to prevent wrongful praying but also will open the door into a level of prayer heretofore unknown.

## II. ILLUSTRATIONS WHICH CLARIFY IT

The first illustration of this truth is the rod of Moses in Exodus 4. Moses had begun his ministry forty years earlier only to fail in his own energy. God has issued the call and made clear that He would provide the power by which the people of God would be delivered from Egyptian bondage. After that discourse in Exodus 3, Moses said, "What if they will not believe me, or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you'" (Exodus 4:1). What followed was a unique experience with Moses' rod. That rod, in the hand of Moses, now was the credential of authority, calling that God was into the situation. The problem before was that Moses had done all that Moses could do. That simply was not enough. Now, armed with a relationship with God in which God would provide both *direction* and *dynamics*, the task would be done. Look at all Moses was able to accomplish with the rod: He defeated the magicians of Egypt, parted the Red Sea, sent plagues upon the land, brought water out of a rock, and defeated Amalek in the Valley of Rephidim! Was it the rod that did all of this? No, the rod was a catalyst, a credential, which, provided by God, brought God into the affair with all His power. Before that experience of total submission to God on Moses' part that rod could do nothing more than a man could do. But now, with God's hand on his life, Moses could be used to do what God wanted him to do! This is what I want you to see: All that the rod was in the hand of Moses, the name of Jesus is to us. It brings all that God is in Christ into the situation prayed for as well as into the one who prays. It is the only credential needed to turn the tide in the battle, to open a path through the problem, or to bring provision in times of despairing want!

The second illustration of this truth regards marriage. It is the custom today for the bride to bear the name of the husband. In the marriage ceremony she is legally placed into the name of her husband. Let us suppose that a bride is very poor in every way. She has no money in the bank, no real estate, no borrowing power, no earning power, no record of any worth at all. But the moment she becomes "Mrs." she moves out of the realm of her past into all that the name of her husband means.

Let us suppose that he is rich in every way. He has thousands of dollars in the bank, sprawling real estate interests, millions of dollars in potential credit open to him, tremendous earning capacity, and a phenomenal record of worth in general. The "Mrs.," from the moment that she becomes his wife, identifies with all of his riches and influence. She no longer acts in her name but in his! She can spend money from his bank, live on his real estate, operate on his borrowing power, enjoy his earnings, and live in the splendor of all that he is worth!

Do you see? The church, "betrothed to become 'Mrs.' Jesus," has been authorized to operate in the name of Jesus! Hallelujah!

The third illustration of this truth is from the legal field—the power of attorney. As you know, this is a legal arrangement whereby one person may represent another in his absence in a certain matter. There is specific power of attorney which designates the matter or matters in which a person may act in another's behalf. There is also general power of attorney which authorizes one to act in all matters pertaining to another who is absent. Jesus has given every Christian general power of attorney in all matters and with this power, the right to use His name in every situation! The sky is not even the limit!

### III. WORDS WHICH ILLUMINATE IT

Some words shed light on this tremendous area of truth. The first is *renunciation*. When we respond to the command to pray in Jesus' name, we are admitting the bankruptcy of our own name. We are renouncing our own merit or worth at the throne of grace. We are admitting that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing. If I were to attempt to pray in my own name, I would find that my prayer would have no more worth or result than the worth of the name in which it was prayed. Therefore, gladly I pray, disclaiming any credit and walking out of my name into His name. Like the bride coming from abject poverty to marry the wealthy husband, we may sing, "Out of my want and into Thy wealth . . . Jesus, I come to Thee."

The next word is *identification*. To pray in Jesus' name is to pray under an assumed name. But, praise the Lord, the assumption is perfectly legal and duly encouraged. We are to pray in identity with the person of Jesus. All that Jesus

did in His earthly life was for us. All that He sent the Holy Spirit to do after His ascension was for us. All that He does at His position at God's right hand is for us. All that He is, He is for us. I can thus identify with all that He did as if I had done it myself. When I was baptized I identified with His death. When I arose from the watery grave I identified with His resurrection. I have received the same authority over Satan, the same victory Jesus did. I will be identified with Him in power and authority. We shall be identified with Him at His coming and in the ages to come. This identity is legal and total. First John 4:17 says, "By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world."

The next word is *possession*. Jesus has literally given us His name! It is ours by legal possession. What does that mean? All that the name means is all that the person means. A person is identified by His name. All that Jesus was, His name is, and to have His name is to have Jesus. Paul said, "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Did you notice the words "and gave Him as head over all things to the church"? I have the liberty to say in every situation, "For this I have Jesus." When I use that name I am confessing that He is mine and I am His.

Our next word is *submission*. You may say, "But I thought to pray in the name of Jesus was to pray with authority." Yes, but Jesus' authority rested in His submission to the Father (John 8:29). Our authority also rests in our submission to Him. To pray in His name is to ask by His authority; and to ask by His authority is to ask in accordance with His will as revealed in His Word. Thus, submission to the will of God is a vital matter in praying in Jesus' name.

Another vital word is *representation*. As I come to the Father in Jesus' name, I am fulfilling my privilege of representing Him and His interests here on earth. Having the power of attorney means that I can act in His name, in His behalf, in accord with His best interests in every matter pertaining to Him. Mystery of mysteries! Jesus desires that I represent Him in prayer as if I must provide that which is lacking. I must pray for the lost, representing Jesus. As His representative, I

must invite folks to the Father. Withal I must pray without ceasing in that name, representing all that He is and all that He has done!

Consider also, the word *expectation*. If I prayed in my name, I could only expect such results to accrue as fitted the worthiness of my name. But since I pray in Jesus' name, I may expect the answer in accord with the value of His name. I can, therefore, pray with great and excited expectation. When I pray in Jesus' name I can expect to receive it just as much as if Jesus had prayed it himself.

### CONCLUSION

Paul wrote,

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

In the meanwhile, we have been given that name by which to do all things. We are to pray in that name. Jesus has bequeathed us His name—the full power of attorney to act in His behalf. His standing in the court of the Father is my standing in the court of the Father. Notice: we are saved by calling on His name, we are baptized into His name, we are to pray in the name of Jesus, and we are in Him and have legal right to that name. The unlimited use of the name implies the confidence that God still has in the church. That privilege has not been withdrawn.

We could try to analyze, theorize, or argue, but Jesus said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do." We must start acting as if we believe He told the truth! Jesus said, "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full" (John 16:24).

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