

4.12.26

Praying In Preparation for Pentecost: Forgiving and Being Forgiven; Praying and Believing; Agreeing and Authority; Receiving and the Bread of Life

First Things First

Mark 11:24-25 ESV

*“As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, **so that** your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”*

Interesting that the connection to verse 24 of Mark chapter 11 is seldom made to verse 25, leaving the interpretation of the passage completely

untethered from its original and intended context. In fact, verse 24, without verse 25, has (sadly) been used in the faith movement to mislead thousands into unhealthy expectations and entitlements from one's relationship with God. In fact, praying self-willed, self-purposed prayers, too often promoted by "what we want" rather than praying Christ-willed, Christ-purposed prayers, prompted by "what we need", is why many Christians struggle to have their prayers consistently and effectively answered. Teaching the "self-willed, self-purposed" kind of prayer leads to misguided faith. Ultimately, a misguided faith is a failed faith, leaving those who believe in it with unrealistic expectations and often leading to a complete crisis of faith. Disillusioned and angry, they wrongly believed that God was to be on demand for whatever they asked and believed for, whenever they wanted it. But biblical faith is founded on the good pleasure, plans, purposes, and unmovable will of God rather than the pleasure, plans, purposes, and ever-changing will of man. Biblical faith is founded upon love for who God is - rather than a manipulative and entitled expectation for what we may or may not want Him to do. Without forgiving one another, which is the perfect (like Christ) sacrifice, the uninformed, the deceived, or the arrogant, will continue to stand and pray prayers that HAVE NO LIFE or eternal purpose. Wrongly, we continue on...

...If I just believe more, I can ask for more!

...if I can visualize it, I can speak it into existence!

...God, You have promised in Your Word that if I believe it, I can receive it!

...Whatever I ask in Your Name, You will do it!

...I claim this under my authority as a believer!

Each of those statements carries various elements of biblical truth, and yet when abused or used outside the right and righteous context of the author's intended meaning, there is a problem for those who teach to pray and believe in that way.

As we said, this kind of unbiblical faith has too often led many Christians into a tragic crisis of faith rather than biblically discipling them to build a stronger, more complete, or perfected faith. We must go back to the origin of this error or doctrinal falsehood.

To begin, neither you nor I (nor anyone, for that matter) can untether the two verses of Mark 11 from their shared context and coupled meaning. Jesus taught them as a seamless progression of cohesive truth. Here is how that works. First, ask yourself, *'Why would God obligate Himself to answering any and every prayer request made of Him, regardless of the intent or condition of the heart?'* If one can have faith for the right and righteous thing, then one can also have faith for the wrong and unrighteous thing. The difference or distinction between the two is as Jesus taught...

Matthew 15:18 ESV

“But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.”

The biblical premise for praying (asking), believing, and receiving in prayer is made completely possible only when preceded by praying and believing from a clean and right heart, which leads us to forgive others for their

trespasses against us so that our heavenly Father forgives us of ours. In other words, the effectiveness and success of our praying and believing are directly related to our forgiving and being forgiven from a right and righteous heart. That is precisely why Jesus said, *“and when you pray, pray this way; “forgive us of our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”* We cannot untether one from the other: our praying, believing, and receiving, from the condition, intent, and motive of our hearts. The two are uniquely connected to one another by way of preferring and surrendering to God’s will above our will for ourselves. With Yeshua, this started with an emptying of the heart of those consequential trespasses - the ones we have committed and the ones committed against us - the ones we have done, and the ones we have left undone.

Here is the good news regarding our praying, our believing, and our receiving, which we must reconcile to our faith and relationship with God and with one another. Reconciliation is always possible through forgiving and being forgiven.

Go to your brother and forgive, and be forgiven; go to your sister and forgive, and be forgiven. In surrendered obedience, offer love and a full measure of grace through the means of deserved or undeserved forgiveness, which will carry with it the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. In that humbled condition, we are now aligned to pray His will for our world - this prayer is incomparably liberating. It is not only liberating to the one who is praying and believing, but it also liberates the prayer being prayed and believed for from the obvious human hindrances. Praying to God the Father, in Jesus Name, by the power of the Holy Spirit cuts away

the will of our flesh to allow us to freely pray His will be done, and His Kingdom come. This all starts with forgiving and being forgiven from a place of good intent and pure motives. Amazing.

Including Mark 11, here are some further biblical examples of what our prayer, believing, and receiving should look like through the lens of Him to Whom we pray. Look closely for the connection Jesus makes to the swift forgiveness and reconciliation of an offense or trespass in relation to the offering of our prayer and worship to our Creator. Let's open our hearts to the biblical realities of those hindrances to our prayer that we ourselves can choose to control and correct. Let's welcome into our daily prayer the call of God to forgiveness, to righteousness, to the motive and intent of our hearts, and to living in right and righteous relationships with one another.

Matthew 5:23-24 ESV

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

James 5:16 ESV

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

1 Peter 3:7-12 ESV

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. Finally, all of you have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

James 4:3-10 ESV

“You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? But he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be

turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

Preparing for Pentecost: Overcoming Hindered Prayer

4.12.26 /4.18,26 *Confession, Forgiveness, and Repentance:* Regularly confessing sins and seeking forgiveness can restore our relationship with God and clear the way for effective prayer. This is how Jesus taught us to pray.

4.26.26 *Aligning Motives and Intent:* Ensure that your requests align with God's will and purpose. Reflect on your motives and intent before bringing prayer to God.

5.3.26 *Strengthening and Increasing Faith:* Cultivate a strong faith through prayer, scripture reading, and community support to overcome doubt.

5.10.26 *Persistent and Purposed Prayer:* Continue to pray and seek God, even when answers seem delayed. Colossians 4:2 encourages us to "continue in prayer" and remain steadfast. Pray His purposes and will be done over you and in you.

5.17.26 *In One Mind and One Accord*

By courageously confronting these hindrances, we can enhance our prayer life and develop a deeper connection, consistently displaying a more purposeful and effective faith in God. Remember, effective prayer is rooted in a sincere, clean heart, fearless faith, and an unwavering commitment to living in alignment with God's Word, God's Will, and God's Ways.

4.19.26

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Jesus Taught Us How to Pray

Luke 11:1-4 ESV

“Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, *‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’* And he said to them, *‘When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’*”

There is still much for us to learn from how Jesus taught us to pray. The fact that He taught us how to pray is most significant and what we must start with. Within the eternal template of “The Our Father,” or the biblical model of “the Lord's Prayer,” there is a strong relationship between forgiveness and receiving our daily bread, which in this context means *[spiritual nourishment/sustenance, instruction, blessing, life, or daily necessities or needs]*. Or, in other words, *“the bread of life.”* Much like

forgiving and being forgiven, the precepts of daily bread are revealed to us in how Jesus taught us to pray.

“*Give us this day our daily bread*” is a revelation waiting for fulfillment. And, we know that nothing we begin can be completed or fulfilled without Yeshua or Christ the Word. He is both the founder and finisher of our faith.

Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJV

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Interestingly, in this context of completion and perfection, Jesus will also eventually introduce Himself as “*the bread of life.*” However, one can not overlook the significance of the connection between praying, believing, receiving, and the need and spiritual value of the perfect and complete sacrifice of Christ, the bread of life, and the forgiveness of one’s transgression.

Jesus freely gave us the bread of life, in that He gave us Himself - He is the bread of life.

Listen further to the connection that Jesus Yeshua made between bread and forgiveness, between forgiveness and our deliverance from evil, and the completion or the perfecting of our faith.

Matthew 6:11-13 ESV

“Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we also forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

What we can discover is a biblical understanding that the forgiveness we often withhold from others not only affects the forgiveness our Heavenly Father extends to us, but also paralyzes and ultimately damages our own faith as we pray and believe for the daily petitions we consider important to ourselves and others.

Matthew 6:14-15 ESV

“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

How significant then does this sound to the praying and believing follower of Jesus? As we move further into John’s Gospel, we read that Jesus is now instructing followers with an even deeper and all-important introduction. Jesus, shockingly, reveals Himself to His followers and critics as *the bread of life*. This is unheard of and considered blasphemy against the Temple and the Sanhedrin court.

John 6:32-35

“Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the

true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

Why is this statement from Jesus significant?

How do bread, life, and forgiveness of transgressions align to our praying, believing, and receiving?

A few years ago, I heard a brief teaching from a Jewish Messianic Rabbi regarding these two questions - his biblical context is sound and solid, and fits here perfectly. Here is the progression.

Yeshua shares the Passover Meal with His Disciples - The Last Supper (Unleavened Bread)

Matthew 26:26

“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”

The Bread of Life - Yeshua as our spiritual nourishment, as the complete and perfect sacrifice for our sins and transgressions.

John 6:35

“Jesus said to them, *“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger...”*”

Interestingly, Jesus was born in Bethlehem - Bethlehem in Hebrew [beit-lechem; means “house of bread”]

Micah 5:2

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, *from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*”

John 7:42

“Has not the Scripture said that the *Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?*”

The Hebrew Language is alpha-numeric - All 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet have a meaning that carries a numeric value or meaning.

[Bethlehem] in Hebrew is *Beit-le-chem*, meaning “house of bread,” and it has a numeric value of (490).

[Nativity] in Hebrew is *Mo-le-det*, meaning “land of my birth” and has a numeric value of (490).

[Perfect] in Hebrew is *Tam-mim*; meaning “complete, whole, and blameless” and has a numeric value of (490). Scripture teaches Christ the Messiah as the complete and perfect sacrifice for our sin or transgression.

In Matthew 18, Peter asks Jesus how many times one should forgive another - Jesus, seventy times seven, having a value of (490).

Matthew 18:21-22 NASB

*“Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus *said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”*

So here it is - spelled out for us in ways that cannot be denied.

Christ the Word is our Bread of Life. Christ the Messiah and Redeemer is the complete and perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness of all our transgressions. **The bread is life - the life is Christ - Christ is our sacrifice and forgiveness.**

John 1:29 ESV

“The next day he (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 6:50-51 ESV

“This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

2 Peter 2:24 ESV

“He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.”

Christ the Messiah, our Lord and Savior, is the righteous authority and power by which we resist all evil and dispel and overcome all principalities of darkness. Outside of *Yeshua ha Mashiach*, we do not have the authority or the power, or the command and demand in prayer if we have not righteously fulfilled the will and expectations from the heart of God the Father. Forgive and be forgiven, and then receive our daily bread. And, when we have, then by all means and in righteous obedience - pray His Kingdom come, and His will be done. Pray in the name and humility of Christ Jesus. Pray in humble faith and courageous belief, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. This is a prayer that when we pray it with a pure heart, He longs to answer.