



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Equipping & Encouraging Believers
In Prayer

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PRAYING IN JESUS NAME

Years ago, an area church called a minister of music named "Kevin Meador." He had the same exact name as me. It was chaos for months until everyone learned that there were two of us with the same name. I would get his phone calls and he would get mine. I had to explain regularly that I had not stopped preaching to do music ministry. People finally started asking, "Do you mean the preacher Kevin Meador or the minister of music Kevin Meador?" People were confused because ~~two different men had the same name.~~

You see, a person's name is unique and distinctive. It is spelled a particular way and it stands for that person—who the person is and what the person does. When you hear or see a name, you think of that person. You think of the characteristics and actions of a person. For instance, when people mention the name "Kevin Meador," they think of an evangelist, preaching, and The Prayer Closet. My name is connected with who I am and what I am.

The same is true for the name of Jesus. His name is unique and distinctive. It represents Him—His person and His work. His name stands for who He is and what He does. Because of this, it is the sweetest and most precious name of all time. It is the name that is exalted above every name.

In the gospel of John, Jesus teaches us to pray in His name. We are to use the name of Jesus in our praying and pleading. When we pray, we are to use this precious and exalted name. Yet, what does it mean to use the name of Jesus in our praying? How are you to use His name when you

pray?

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on praying in the name of Jesus. We will look at what it means to use the name of Jesus in prayer. We will also examine ways to adore Jesus and to pray for Christlikeness. Using the name of Jesus in prayer is more than mouthing the words. To use His name in prayer requires that you know Him and walk with Him. It is not a magical phrase that moves the hand of God. But it is a life-transforming truth that changes you and molds and shapes your praying.

The Biblical Teaching

In order to use His name in our praying, we must first see what He taught about this in John's Gospel. Jesus' invitation to pray in His name is found only in **John 14-16**. The rest of the New Testament contains only one other explicit reference to prayer in this manner, "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (**Ephesians 5:19-20**).

In **John 14-16**, Jesus teaches about praying in His name in the following verses:

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

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

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit; and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father *in My name* He may give you” (John 15:16).

“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father *in My name* He will give you” (John 16:23).

“Until now you have asked nothing *in My name*. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24).

What does Jesus teach us about praying in His name?

- (1) We are to ask in His name;
- (2) There are no limits to what we can ask for in His name;
- (3) The Father powerfully responds when we pray in His name;
- (4) There is incredible power in praying in the name of Jesus.

The Meaning Of Praying In His Name

You may be thinking, “I can see the necessity and power of praying in Jesus’ name. And I know that I’m supposed to pray in His name. But what does that mean?” Praying in His name is characterized by four distinct qualities. *Praying in Jesus’ name means seeking the glory of God.* To pray in Jesus’ name is to ask for that which will glorify God. It is pleading for those things that will honor God and reveal His greatness. In **John 14:13**, Jesus declares, “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” Jesus says to ask in His name so that **the Father may be glorified in the Son.**

Jesus was consumed with a passionate desire to glorify the Father. He was preoccupied with honoring and revealing the greatness of the Father. In **John 17:4**, Jesus says, “I have glorified You on the earth.” After explaining to His disciples that He

was going to die, Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify Your name” (**John 12:28**). The Word of God declares that Jesus was filled with zeal for His Father’s house (**John 2:13-17**). Even when He taught His disciples to pray, the glory of God dominated His teaching, “In this manner, therefore, pray, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be *Your name*, *Your kingdom* come, *Your will* be done on earth as it is in heaven” (**Matthew 6:9-10**).

To pray in Jesus’ name is to ask for those things that will glorify God. Your praying must be characterized by pleading for those things that will honor God. It is to ask for those things that will reveal how powerful, good, merciful, and great that God is. In order to pray in the name of Jesus, you must be consumed with passion for the glory of God.

Praying in Jesus’ name means that you depend on the person and work of Jesus Christ. The only reason that you have access with God is through the person and work of Jesus Christ. You are accepted with God through Jesus Christ. His sinless life, His obedience to the Father, His death, and His resurrection are the foundation of your praying. God accepts you because of Jesus. God listens to you because of Jesus. God answers you because of Jesus.

The Word of God declares in **Romans 5:1**, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” A person experiences peace with God when he or she turns from sin to trust in Jesus Christ. A person is brought into a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior. Because the person trusts in Jesus, God accepts the person. He grants the person access into His presence, “For through Him (Jesus) we both have access by one Spirit to the Father” (**Ephesians 2:18**).

You have the remarkable privilege of prayer because of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The “name” of Jesus represents who He is and what He does. It is because of His name that you can call God your Father. It is because of His name that you can cry out to God and know that He is listening and answering.

Praying in Jesus’ name means realizing that you can pray because of who Jesus is and what He has done. This truth should affect you in two ways. First, it should humble you. You have no right to

know God as your Father. You have not merited or earned anything from God. Everything that You have as a child of God is because of Jesus Christ. The privilege of prayer is granted to you because Jesus has opened the way into the Father's presence. God accepts you and listens to you because of His Son Jesus Christ.

While this truth should humble you, it should also inspire boldness in you. It should make you confident in entering the Father's presence. It should inflame your heart to ask boldly of your Father. When you pray to your Father, you are not coming on the basis of your worth or merit. You are coming on the basis of who Jesus is and what He has done.

Numerous people have come to me at prayer conferences confessing feelings of unworthiness. They either feel unworthy to pray or unworthy to ask boldly of God. Perhaps you feel this way. You must remember that you are not praying to God because of your worthiness. You are not asking of God on the basis of your merit to receive from Him. You are entering His presence because of Jesus Christ. He is your only and true living way to God (**John 14:6**). Because Christ lived and died for you, you are accepted, forgiven, and heard by God. When you pray, you are talking to your Father who loves you, accepts you, and listens to you because of His Son, Jesus Christ. Depend on who Jesus is and what He has done when you pray. Praying in Jesus' name means resting in and relying on His character and work in order to communicate with God and to ask of Him.

Praying in Jesus' name means understanding and obeying His Word. The only one who can pray in His name is the one who is striving to understand and obey His Word. Jesus declares in **John 15:7**, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." The last phrase in this verse connects it to the verses where Jesus speaks of praying in His name. Notice the similarity between the phrase "you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you" with the passages we are examining, particularly **John 14:13-14**. This provides you with powerful insight into the meaning of praying in His name.

Jesus is saying that His Word must guide your praying. You must fill your life with His

Word and seek to obey it. When you do this, it will shape and conform your praying to the will of God. Obedience helps you desire and pray for what God desires. When this happens, you can ask whatever you will and receive it (**1 John 5:14**). It is because your will is being changed to ask what God wills. When you are striving to understand and obey His Word, you are more in tune with what Christ desires. As you walk in His Word, you gain insight into what God's will is. When Christ's Word becomes a part of you, you begin to think according to His will. Understanding and obeying God's Word enables you to desire and pray for what God desires.

Praying in Jesus' name means putting into practice what Jesus has taught. You cannot pray in His name if you are not striving to obey Him. To use His name in prayer apart from obedience to Him is hypocrisy and an abomination. Praying in His name flows out of knowing and obeying His Word.

Praying in His name means praying in the same way that Jesus would. A popular slogan among Christians today is "WWJD." This stands for "What Would Jesus Do." According to Jesus in **John 14-16**, we would have to modify that to "WWJP," or "What Would Jesus PRAY!"

In Scripture, the name of a person stands for what that individual is and does. The name is so closely identified with the person that, in many cases, the name effectively equals the person. For instance, **Psalms 20:1** says, "May the name of the God of Jacob defend you." Also **Psalms 116:13** says, "I will take up the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the LORD." In both instances, the word "name" stands for God Himself. The same is true in the New Testament. When John speaks of "those who believe in His name" (**John 1:12**), he is referring to faith in Jesus Himself.

Praying in Jesus' name means representing Him. It is praying in the way that He would concerning a person or situation. Those who pray in His name are so identifying themselves and their requests with Jesus that they are in effect claiming to pray what the Savior Himself would pray. Samuel Chadwick wrote, "To pray in the Name of Christ . . . is to pray as one who is at one with Christ, whose mind is the mind of Christ, whose desires are the desires of Christ, and whose purpose

is one with that of Christ" (Samuel Chadwick, *The Path of Prayer*, Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1936).

To pray in Jesus' name is to ask the question, "What would Jesus pray in this situation?" It is praying in harmony with what is revealed about Jesus, His desires, and His ways. It is to seek the mind of Christ when you pray, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 2:5**). Praying in Jesus' name is not a magical formula that anyone can use to get whatever he or she wants from God. It is when a follower of Jesus Christ seeks to pray according to character and desires of his or her Lord and Savior.

In summary, praying in Jesus' name is characterized by four distinct qualities:

- *It is praying for that which will glorify God.* Just as Jesus was consumed by a passionate desire to glorify God, your praying must be characterized by a passionate desire to ask for that which will honor and glorify God.
- *It is praying that rests on and relies in the person and work of Jesus.* You pray and ask of God on the basis of who Jesus is and what He has done. It is His merit that opens the door for you to seek the Father.
- *It is praying that flows out of obedience to the Word of God.* It is asking of God as you seek to understand and obey Jesus.
- *It is praying in the way that Jesus would pray.* It is asking the question, "What would Jesus pray for this person or in this situation?"

Learning To Pray In His Name

Learning to pray in His name requires that you cultivate these qualities in your life and your praying. The following practical suggestions are offered to help you develop these qualities.

- (1) **Pray that God will create a consuming passion in you for the glory of God.** Praying in Jesus' name means asking for those things that will glorify God. Call on God to burn within your heart the desire to glorify Him in all things, especially in your praying. You can use **1 Corinthians 10:31** to plead for this, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

- (2) **Ask God to enable you to confront and remove selfishness from your life, especially in your praying.** A hindrance to praying in a way that glorifies God is selfishness. It is impossible to pray for that which glorifies God when the focus is only on one's needs and desires. Pray that God will help you develop a life of prayer that is God-centered instead of self-centered.

- (3) **Plead that God will help you purify your motives in asking of Him.** Your heavenly Father desires that you bring all of your requests to Him. He longs for you to share your heart and life with Him. Sometimes those requests may be self-centered. It is important to ask Him on a continual basis to purify your motives in making requests of Him. Don't ever stop making requests of your Father. Never hesitate to ask of Him. Yet, always ask Him to purify Your motives for asking and receiving. Be willing to change your request as He leads you.

- (4) **Praise God for Jesus and remind Him of Christ's work for you.** As I pray, I often praise God for Jesus Christ. I rejoice in and exalt Him for His person and His work. At the same time, I continually remind my Father of the fact that I am clothed in His righteousness. I declare to my Father that I stand before Him on the basis of His merit. I do these things for two basic reasons. First, the Father and Son are worthy of such worship. Jesus has done for me what I could never have done for myself. Second, God doesn't need reminding that I am in His presence because of Jesus. However, I need it. It creates confidence in me and inflames my pleading with God. Even though I feel my unworthiness in His presence, I know that He has made me worthy through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Even though I don't have any right to ask, because of Jesus, I can. As you pray, saturate your praying with praise for Jesus—His person and work. Fill your prayers with honor and glory for Jesus the only Lord and Savior.

- (5) **Memorize and plead Ephesians 2:18 and Ephesians 3:12.** These two verses state in no uncertain terms that you have access into God's presence. You have this access along with confidence and boldness. You might consider