

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

Read Luke 11:5-13

Prayer is not enough

Prayer is essential. Prayer is crucial. But prayer alone is not enough. It is the prayer of *faith* that changes things. Jesus taught this plainly (Matthew 17:19-20).

1. Have faith in God

The prayer of faith is primarily an expression of faith in God himself. Like any father he will always do what is best, whether we like it or not. So we TRUST him because he always acts towards us—

- with love
- with power
- with fairness
- with faithfulness
- with goodness

2. Have faith in his promise

God has given us many promises on which we can base our faith. God has committed himself to keep his Word. See 1 Kings 18:56; Psalm 145:14. He will give us what he promises (Luke 11:9-13)—

- Peace (John 14:27)
- Salvation (Acts 16:31)
- Healing (Mark 16:18; James 5:14)
- Deliverance (Colossians 1:13)
- Daily needs (Lord's Prayer)
- Victory (Romans 8:37; 2 Cor 2:14)
- Power (Acts 1:8)

3. Claim God's promise

Read Matthew 8:13; 9:2, 22, 28; 15:28; 17:20; 21:21, 22; Mark 11:22-25; Luke 17:19; 18:42; John 14:12-14; 16:24; 1 John 5:14-15.

My story

As a young man, I had to prove for myself the reality of what I am talking about today. I suffered a serious motor cycle accident that left me in a position where only the power of God could rescue me. I had multiple injuries some of which nearly proved fatal.

4. Faith means acting on God's promise

I learned the following principles—

- Recognise your need (Matthew 8:2)
- Identify the appropriate promise of God (Heb 13:5, 6)
- Look to the Word, not to the world (Matthew 8:30-31)

- Believe God’s Word and confess it (Luke 5:5)
- Act your faith (Matthew 12:13)
- Don’t take no for an answer (Matthew 15:22-28)

5. Keep on believing

Leo Harris was a man with an apostolic ministry. Many were healed through him. When my healing did not come, I asked him why. He just said: ‘Keep on believing, Barry.’ See Hebrews 10:23. I did not feel I should be prayed for again (although there is nothing wrong with doing this). I decided just to keep believing and confessing God’s Word

6. Let’s believe God today

In the story of the friend at midnight Jesus plainly said it was the man’s ‘*importunity*’ (AV) that paid off. Luke 11:8

- impudence (ESV) persistence (NRSV, NKJV)
- boldness (NIV)
- unblushing persistence (NBC)
- shamelessness (GNB)
- effrontery (L and S)
- importunate solicitation without regard to time or place (Peschbacher)
- The opposite of reverence, politeness, discretion

The prayer of faith

Let’s pray with ‘importunity.’ Let’s believe God. Let’s not give up. Let’s expect more of God’s power in our midst. Let’s pray like the apostles—

An apostolic prayer

‘And now, Lord... grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness’ (Acts 4:29-31).

SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT

Remember: You don’t have to answer all the questions. Choose those that seem most relevant.

Biblical

1. Note how Jesus begins this passage with a question. What kind of answer does he expect? How true would it be of you (or your friends!)?
2. What can we learn about the kind of houses people inhabited in those days? (7)
3. What does verse 8 tell us about human nature?
4. Think about the three words Jesus uses about prayer in verse 9. Do they all mean the same thing? If so, why does he use all three? If not, what are the differences?

Is there a progression of thought from the first to the third? Discuss the possibilities.

5. What do verses 11 to 13 tell us about fatherhood? About God?
6. Read Matthew 8:13; 9:2, 22, 28; 15:28; 17:20; 21:21, 22; Mark 11:22-25; Luke 17:19; 18:42; John 14:12-14; 16:24; 1 John 5:14, 15. There is a common theme running through all these passages. What is it?

Personal and practical

7. What needs are you facing right now in your life? Which promise of Scripture can you claim?
8. What is the significance of the word ‘everyone’ in verse ten? What does it mean for you personally?
9. On a scale of one (little) to ten (much) how would you rate your persistence in prayer? What can you do about it?
10. Memorise Luke 11:13

About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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