

**Grace Q&A 7**

**with**

**Ken Legg**

## **If God is sovereign, why pray?**

- A) When we pray - are we to have the mindset of expecting an answer, an outcome, or simply peace?**
- B) Some teachers/movements claim that there are ways to pray more powerfully and effectively. What, if anything, makes one prayer more powerful than another? Is terminology like 'powerful' prayer Biblical or helpful?**
- C) Do the private prayers of a Christian have an impact on an unbeliever receiving Christ when praying for their salvation?**

# **If God is sovereign, why pray?**

- ✓ **Prayer aligns us with the purposes of God and demonstrates our dependency on Him**
- ✓ **Prayer does not change the will of God. It does not get Him to change His purposes. It takes us into His counsel so that we can flow with Him and the direction He is going**
- ✓ **And prayer reminds us of our dependency upon Him. This is why Paul said, 'Pray without ceasing'**

A) When we pray - are we to have the mindset of expecting an answer, an outcome, or simply peace?

- **Jesus said:** *'Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened'* **(Matt.7:7-8)**
- **But is that true? Or do some get lucky and others miss out?**
- *'Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him'* **(1 John 5:14-15)**

- **Our Father will give us 'good' things. There is a discrepancy between Paul's prayers and our prayers. Our idea of 'good things' is different to his**
- **Our prayers are generally:**
- **A 'wish list'. E.g. a mortgage application approval, our children/grandchildren will pass their exam, promotion at work, our house to sell at a good price, an upgrade on our overseas flight, etc.**
- **A 'fix list'. Fix this relationship, take away this problem, get me out of this mess...**

- **But what's wrong with asking for these things? Aren't they some of the 'good' things the Father gives us?**
- **Many, many times God does answer these prayers**
- **But, these are not Paul's prayer themes**
- **And what we ask for is not always good for us. How do we know what's good for us?**
- **When we want what we want and not what God wants this is eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**

**God provided a whole garden of fruit trees for Adam and Eve to partake from. But they were forbidden to eat from one tree**

**The serpent persuaded them that the forbidden fruit was 'good'**

***'When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate'***

**(Gen.3:6)**

- **This tree was tempting to them because they did not understand or appreciate the scope of all they had been given in the garden. The serpent beguiled them into believing that what they had was insufficient and what they didn't have was something very good they were missing out on**
- **When something is denied to us in prayer it is because it is not 'good' for us**
- **The temptation is to see prayer as something which makes God bend to our will. It becomes the means by which we can 'take'**



- **Sometimes we want to pray ourselves and others out of things that God may want to use**
- **Prayer is an environment where we receive the good that God has already provided for us, not a place where we try to take something that is going to ultimately be bad for us**
- **The less we understand and delight in what God has given us, the more we will want to take what is not in the will of God for us**

***'Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come'***

**(Eph.1:15-21)**

- **Are we eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? How do we know?** *'The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God'* **(Rom.8:26-27)**
- **The context is suffering. We don't know what we should pray for because we don't know what is good. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray according to the will of God**
- **The next verse says** *'And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose'* **(Rom.8:28)**

**B) Some claim that there are ways to pray more powerfully and effectively. What, if anything, makes one prayer more powerful than another?**

- **Some popular concepts of prayer are unbiblical, unhelpful and not glorifying to God. E.g. 'Storming the gates of heaven'; 'unlocking heaven', etc.**
- **We are not 'storming the gates of heaven'. Prayer is not an arm-wrestle with God to get Him to bend His will to ours. 'Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness' (A W Pink)**

- **There is no such thing as 'prayer that unlocks Heaven'. Two thousand years ago 3 words unlocked heaven for all time: 'It is finished'!**  
***'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'***  
**(Rom.8:32)**
- **The one factor that gives us power in prayer is that we come to God through our Great High Priest**

**C) Do the private prayers of a Christian have an impact on an unbeliever receiving Christ?  
(When praying for their Salvation)**

**\*Again, prayer is not the power that saves but it aligns us with His purpose and demonstrates our dependence upon Him in ministry**

***\*'...meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains' (Col.4:3)***

**\*We knock on doors, but God opens them. When we try to force doors opens it usually leads to conflict, strife and pain**

*\*'Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest' (Matt.9:38)*

*\*Pray to get the right people in the right place at the right time. Acts 13:1-3*

*\*Pray for boldness to witness. 'Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word' (Acts 4:29)*

*\*Pray that we are not muzzled by political correctness, or sidetracked by issues and agendas within the church. 'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith' (2 Thes.3:1-2)*

**2) Will believers pass through the  
7 years tribulation?**

**Or will the rapture take place before the  
tribulation or midway through?**

**What's your understanding?**



**\*I would recommend two of my videos to explain more fully my understanding:**

**1) The Book of Revelation**

**<https://youtu.be/KdIRLkvf09I>**

**2) End Times 2. A Bird's Eye View**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0R55jh4DKk>**

**\*Misunderstanding arises if we fail to make a distinction between the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord**

**\*When we differentiate between the two it seems clear to me that we do go through at least some of the Great Tribulation, i.e. the six seals of Rev.6**

**\*The rapture is described in Rev.7**

**\*Also, 2 Thes.2:1-4 seems to say that the Church will see the Antichrist before the rapture:**

*'Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God'*

**\*Why is this important in the context of grace? Because we need to teach grace as God's empowerment against all opposition**

### 3) According 2 Timothy 1:6-7, what is impartation?

*'Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind'*

*(See also 'For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established' Rom.1:11)*

- **Man does not impart gifts, but God gives them in accordance with His grace. 'But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all... But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills' (1 Cor.12:7,11). 'For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith' (Rom.12:3). 'But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."... And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers' (Eph.4:7-9,11)**

- ✓ **God has anointed every believer with a special gift which is their sphere of ministry**
- ✓ **The laying on of hands carries a strong emphasis on association. E.g. the OT sacrifices**
- ✓ **Those who lay hands on others associate with them is their ministry and the sphere they have some responsibility in and provide accountability**
- ✓ **Those laying hands on a person were confident enough about their call and character as to lay hands on them as a token of recognition and endorsement. E.g. *'Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure'* (1 Tim.5:22)**

## 4) What does 2 John 9-11 mean? Especially verse 11?

***'Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds'***

**'transgress' = to go ahead, go beyond, goes too far, etc.**

- **In his epistles John warned against a specific heresy being taught by the Gnostics, i.e. that Jesus did not come in the flesh. *'For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist'* (2 John 7)**
- **They considered themselves to be progressive, going beyond or ahead of what the apostles taught. But any teaching which is extra-biblical is heresy**
- **Whilst no one has a monopoly on truth there is some teaching which is absolutely essential if we are to accept the one teaching it. E.g. the deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Scriptures, salvation by grace alone through faith, etc.**

- **John taught that the incarnation is absolutely essential to authentic Christian belief. Anyone who does not abide in this doctrine has neither the Son nor the Father**
- **Anyone who comes to us with the teaching that Jesus did not come in the flesh is to be rejected. To receive them in any way is to share in their deception. This action sends a clear message that you do not consider such a person to be a brother (or sister) in Christ**
- **Disassociation with false teachers or unruly brethren is taught in several places in the NT. E.g. the idle, troublemakers, divisive people, the unforgiving, the 'prosperity teaching', etc. This sends a strong message of what is acceptable teaching and behaviour and what isn't**



- **What should our attitude be towards those who do not really embrace the finished work of Christ?**

**5) What does John 6:65 mean? Does it mean God predestined some people to be saved? I need some clarification about this verse and about predestination**

***'And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father"'***

**Salvation needs to be viewed from two perspectives: God's and ours**

**There are five stages in each:**

## God's perspective:

*'And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified'*

**(Rom.8:28-30)**

## **Our perspective:**

***'For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?'***

**(Rom.10:13-15)**

- **If we emphasize one perspective without the other we will end in error. Examples:**
- **Hyper Calvinists will not evangelize, saying 'All those whom God has predestined will be saved anyway'**
- **Hyper Arminians teach and behave as if a person's salvation depends entirely upon our obedience to evangelize**
- **Theologians and Christians have argued this subject for centuries, but the debate has yielded little fruit**



- **My view is that the Bible seems to teach all Christians have been chosen by God:**
- ***'All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out...This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day...No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...' (Jn.6:37,39,44)***
- ***'Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him... I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours' (Jn.17:1,2,9)***

- ***'Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you"' (John 10:25-26)***
- ***'But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth' (2 Thes.2:13)***
- ***'But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (Jn.1:12-13)***

- ***'So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy' (Rom. 9:16)***
- ***'Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed' (Acts 13:48)***
- ***'Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect' (Titus 1:1)***
- ***Does this discourage or encourage evangelism? Paul at Corinth: 'Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city"' (Acts 18:9-10)***



## **What do we understand from these verses?**

- **Only that God is the initiator of our salvation. It didn't begin with our choosing Him but His choosing us**
- **If we say less than this we rob Him of His glory and diminish His grace**
- **If we say more than this we venture outside of the realm of divine revelation into the realm of human speculation**

## Summary

**Hold firmly to these two truths and never allow them to be in conflict with each other:**

➤ *'... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will...'* **(Eph.1:5)**

➤ *'For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe'* **(1 Cor.1:21)**

*'The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us...'*  
**(Deut.29:29)**