

Prayer and the Sovereignty of God

July 24, 2014

Psalm 139:1–6

- 1 O LORD, you have **searched** (*examine, probe, see through*) me and **known** (*yada - to know, to have relations*) me!
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.
- 3 You **search** (*scatter, disperse, scrutinize*) **out** my path and my lying down and are **acquainted** (*to care for, to be of use or service, benefit, profit*) with all my ways.
- 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.
- 5 You **hem** (*confine, secure, shut in, besiege*) me in, behind and before, and **lay** (*put, set, appoint, direct*) your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

Matthew 7:7–11

- 7 **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**
- 8 For **everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.**
- 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?
- 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?
- 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven **give good things to those who ask him!**

Matthew 21:21–22

- 21 And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen.
- 22 And **whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.**”

2 Corinthians 12:7–9

- 7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.
- 8 **Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.**
- 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Matthew 26:38–46

- 38 Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”
- 39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, **if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;** nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”
- 40 And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour?”

41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
42 Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”

43 And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

44 So, leaving them again, he went away and **prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.**

45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and **the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.**

46 Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

Luke 18:1–8

1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they **ought always to pray and not lose heart.**

2 He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man.

3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’

4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man,

5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ ”

6 And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says.

7 And **will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night?** Will he delay long over them?

8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

THE BALANCE BETWEEN PRAYER AND GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

1. Simultaneously, every detail and every event in our lives is under the immediate inspection and sovereign control of God, yet we are commanded to pray about everything and to never stop praying for God’s intervention and change. Never take the attitude of, “Why bother to pray, God will do what He has already ordained?”
2. This continual tension of wondering whether God will move on the change I am asking for, or are the current circumstances His unchanging plan for my life, pushes us past the circumstances and past the apparent results to prayers into seeking and knowing God’s heart. It forces the questions, “What is God doing, what is God’s heart, what is God’s will?”
3. We continue in prayer, making known our requests without fainting, until we receive the answer or until God makes clear His specific will. There is never any place or circumstance in which “give up” on prayer.

James 1:2–5

2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.**