

## Praying in Jesus' Name

What is the most important element of prayer? While many would suggest faith, sincerity, persistence, fervency; I believe it is clear what is most fundamental. It is praying in Jesus' name.

One misconception about praying in Jesus' name is that it is merely something you say. In other words, at the end of the prayer – you say, '*In Jesus' name, Amen.*' Or, at some point in the prayer, you say, '*we ask in Jesus' name that...*' Now there is nothing wrong with saying it at different points in your prayer, or at the beginning or end.

What **is** wrong is to think that praying in Jesus' name is merely saying those words, or that, by simply saying them, it means that you have been praying in Jesus' name. Saying, 'I pray this in Jesus' name' no more means that you have done so than to pray a prayer, and then announce, 'All I have said has God's blessing on it.' Merely saying that does not mean it is true.

Now, I do not want you to become self-conscious about using the words 'In Jesus' name' when you pray. But I also do not want you to attach some sort of superstitious thought to them; like if you do not say these words, your prayer is not as powerful nor as useful.

Sometimes, you notice that people are so expecting the formula 'In Jesus' name, Amen' that if you just end your prayer, most people are caught off guard – as if you did not end properly.

So, while praying in Jesus' name may include saying those words – it means far, far more than that.

So what does it mean?

### 1. To Pray in Jesus' Name Is To Address God by His Name

I want you to understand how bold this statement of Christ's is:

**1John 14:13** '*And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* <sup>14</sup> *"If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."*

That is a massive claim to deity. Can you imagine a human being standing in front of you and saying, 'whatever you ask in David's name, I will do it.' He is saying, 'when you address God, address Him using My name, and I will respond.'

We do not pray to angels. We do not pray to saints. We do not pray to the dead. We do not invoke the names of angels or saints when we pray. So when Jesus says, 'Use My name when you speak to God,' it is to say – 'My name is God's name. And moreover, I will answer your prayer – so pray to Me!'

Pay close attention to what Christ is saying in verses 7 through 11. Verse 7 '*to know Him is to know Me.*' V9-10, '*To have seen Me is to have seen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father is in Me.*'

Jesus is fully identifying Himself with the Father.

Now please take note – Jesus is not identifying Himself **as** the Father. That is a heresy known as Modalism which teaches that Jesus is the Father, Jesus is the Spirit, and they are just three modes that God appears in. No – it is clear that Jesus differentiates Himself from the Father when He says, *‘No man comes to the Father except through Me.’*

**John 1:1** – *‘The Word was with God.’*

They are distinct persons. But they are the same being. Words fail us to describe this, because nothing in our experience can be used to compare or explain two persons who are one being.

But the very strong point that leads up to Jesus’ instruction to pray in His name is that to call on His name is to call on God. Jesus is so identified with the Father that we might say reverently, when you call out the name of Jesus, the Triune God turns His head. Jesus is the name God has revealed Himself with.

Now, sometimes, this mystery of the Trinity makes us nervous. We are a little afraid if we speak to one, we will leave the others out. Or that we should not address Jesus directly, or praise Jesus directly, because then the Father will not be glorified.

We need not be concerned. The Bible teaches very clearly that praising and praying to and through the Son is praise and prayer to the Father. Because the Father and the Son are one being, and are so identified with each other, to praise the one is to praise the other.

**John 5:22-23** *‘For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,’<sup>23</sup> that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him.’*

That is, the Father desires the honour and glory of the Son. The Father is most glorified when the Son is most magnified. In other words, the way that we worship the Father is by worshipping the Son. Son-worship is the mode that the Father has given us to worship Himself. To pray to or through the name of Jesus is to speak to God.

What we have to understand is that Jesus was the clearest revelation of God the world has ever seen. (**Hebrews 1:1-3, John 1:18**).

Now if God has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, and we do not address Him through that name of Jesus, what are we saying to God? We are rejecting Him. Perhaps we might illustrate with a situation. A married woman's maiden name might be maiden name is Smith. Upon marrying, her name changed to Black. Up until her wedding day it was fine for people who knew her to call her Jane Smith. But after that day, she was irrevocably Jane Black. Now let's imagine she meets a friend from childhood who says, ‘Hi Miss Smith.’ Now she might excuse the ignorance and explain – ‘I am married now, and I am Mrs Black.’ But if that person disregarded that,

and every time they saw her, they said, ‘Hi Miss Smith,’ what would they be saying? They would be rejecting her marital status. And Mrs Black would have every reason to disregard their conversation.

Now God’s name has not changed. But our understanding of His name has changed after the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We now know – it is the **name of Jesus** that is the explanation and revelation and exposition of God. And to not use that name is to disregard God’s greatest self-revelation. He has no reason to regard such a prayer.

That means that prayer made to God apart from the name of Jesus is not prayer which He accepts. God knows it; yes He hears it, just as He hears every sound in His universe; but He does not regard it, nor must He. He has made it clear.

**Acts 4:12** *“Nor there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

This is His name. Lord is His title. God is a title. ‘Jesus’ in one of His revealed names.

I love the hidden prophecy in **Proverbs 30:4**:

*“Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son’s name, if you know?”*

So every day millions of prayers go up. They go up to Allah from the Moslems. They go up to Adonai Elohim from the Jews. They go up to a god of their own imagination from the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons.

You might remember that in John 10 Jesus referred to Himself as the door. Look at that Scripture for a moment.

To try to come to God any other way except through the door means you are some kind of intruder. The only people who try to get into your house through the windows and the roof are criminals. To God the Father, people who refuse to come through the door He has appointed, are seen in the same light. They want access, but not through God’s appointed means – through their own.

If I can put it this way, you begin to pray in the name of Jesus, the day you are born again. On that day you come to God through His Son, and on that day – and ever more, you pray based on your salvation in Jesus Christ.

To pray in Jesus name means more than that.

## **II. To Pray in Jesus Name is To Depend on His Merits**

In verse 6 of John 14, Jesus says this – ‘*No one comes to the Father but by Me.*’ (No one accesses the Father, no one makes it to the Father except through Me. For that matter, no one stands before the Father except through Me).

You see, not only are the large majority of people on earth trying to pray but ignoring or rejecting the door, and calling God by names He does not respond to, they also have a huge problem. How can sinners speak to God?

After all, the Bible makes it very clear:

**Psalm 66:18** *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear."*

**John 9:31** *"Now we know that God does not hear sinners;"*

**Habakkuk 1:13** *"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:"*

If you think that God listens to sinners simply because they pray, you need reminding of what Israel went through every Day of Atonement. Read in **Leviticus 16:3-30**. Please read the whole portion because I want you to recognise what it meant for the people of God – forget about the pagans – to be able to appear before God.

Now, we look at Israel standing outside with bated breath, and we say – ‘Well, things have changed.’ Well, things **have** changed in one sense, but God ever remains the same. For sinners to have access to God, for sinners to appear before God, they still need atonement.

Do you know where the English word ‘atonement’ comes from? Its simplicity might surprise you. William Tyndale, responsible for translating the Bible into English, looked for a word which would communicate both the forgiveness of sins, as well as reconciliation with God. So he invented a word. The first part of that word – atone, is actually the two words – at one. (‘One’ used to be pronounced with a long ‘o’). To atone, is to take two parties who cannot be agreed or reconciled and make them at one with one another, in unity. Atonement is ‘at-one-ment’. It is God making us ‘at one’ with Himself. This was always needed. Abel did it. I’m sure Enoch did it. Noah did it. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did it. Israel under the Law of Moses did it in multitudes of sacrifices, the one of Yom Kippur being the greatest.

Do you know what Colossians tells us? These things were but the shadow – the actual body, the substance, the thing which creates the shadows when the light hits it – is Christ Himself. Christ is the atonement.

**1 John 2:1-2** *"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."*

An Advocate is one called to your side. He is a defence, the one who speaks for you, who pleads for you, who makes your case. In our situation the case is Himself. He ever stands before the Father and says – ‘Accept my death as their death, accept my life as their life.’

Do you know what that is? Propitiation – God being satisfied.

**Romans 5:1-2** *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup> By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*

To appear before God in your own name is to try to access the Holy of Holies by yourself. Even the High Priest would not do that.

But when we come in the name of Jesus, we are casting aside our own merits, our own righteousness, our own ability to be pleasing to God, and we are saying, ‘Consider me as if I stood in Christ’s place. I come to you not in my own name, but in His. Receive me, as you would receive Him.’

**Hebrews 10:19** *“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and having a High Priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”*

Do my prayers gain access to God because I beat on the door? Because I shout and scream? Because my emotions are boiling over? Will this move an infinitely holy God? No! What gives you access is the Person and work of Jesus. If you are depending entirely on Him when you come to God, you are praying in the name of Jesus.

By the way, to come in Jesus’ name also means you give up trying to make your prayer worth something. It is also a filthy rag unless it is Christ’s righteousness, unless it is Christ’s prayers, unless the Spirit of God makes those prayers right before God.

### **III. To Pray in Jesus’ Name is To Abide in His Love**

Perhaps you have used someone’s name for a reference or for an opening with someone. You know they might not hear you out, so you say ‘So-and-so said I should call you,’ or ‘Such-and-such a person told me to tell you that he gave me your number, and said I should call.’ Because that person is supposed to be known or trusted by the one we are speaking to, it is assumed it will open the way for us as well.

Perhaps when you are trying to open up conversation with someone, you speak about their child, or their parents or a common friend – and it causes their expression to soften, their eyes warm up – they are glad you like the person they like.

Well, the question is, ‘**Whose name do you drop when you are dealing with God?**’ Other sinners? People who have died?

Who is it that the Father loves most? The answer is Jesus.

**John 3:35** *“The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.”*

**John 5:20** *“For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.”*

We recall also the words of God when the Son was baptised and when He was transfigured – *‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’*.

Now look at the Father’s attitude towards those who embrace the Son -

**John 16:26-27** *“In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; <sup>27</sup> for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.”*

Jesus says – *‘When you ask in My name, I will not have to further persuade the Father, because if you love His Son, then you love Him and He loves you.’*

To ask in Jesus name is to cause the smile of heaven to rest on your bowed head. No name is more loved in heaven than Christ’s. To come before God trusting, depending on, and loving Christ is to come into a place of favour. You need not be afraid. You need not rush out, or try to rattle off your requests.

You might remember some of the story of Esther. As the evil Haman sought to destroy the people of God, Queen Esther was persuaded by Mordecai, to go to the King and plead for the deliverance of the Jews. But the problem was, no one walked into the throne room of a Persian king uninvited. If you walked in to the throne room of a Persian king without having been called, you could be killed on the spot.

Only if the king held up the Golden sceptre – by which to say – ‘Come, I have mercy on you, approach’ – could you survive.

Esther asked for prayer and fasting, and then said those words – ‘If I perish, I perish.’

And so she entered that place, and the Bible tells us:

**Esther 5:2** *“And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.”*

Do you know what happens when a blood-washed, born again believer comes to God, clothed in the name of Christ? He or she finds favour. God does not frown. He is pleased.

**Ephesians 1:6-7** *“To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”*

What things does God give to a believer if they are in Christ?

**2 Corinthians 1:20** *"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."*

**1 Corinthians 3:21-23** "Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: <sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come -- all are yours. <sup>23</sup> And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

**Romans 8:31-32** *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> 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?"*

Do you find yourself trying to be more pleasing to God in your prayer, trying to say perfect words, trying to make yourself more lovable, more favoured by your confession of sin? I want you to know that those are drops in the ocean, when it comes to finding God's favour. Yes, He wants sincerity. Yes He wants wholeheartedness. Yes He wants openness and honesty. Yes He wants faith. But do you know what really makes your prayers pleasing to God? **The fact that you are in Christ.**

When you speak it sounds like Jesus. When you stand there, it looks like Jesus. When you ask, it sounds like Jesus. And so, the Song of Songs says:

**Song of Solomon 2:14** ... *"Let me see your face,  
Let me hear your voice;  
For your voice is sweet,  
And your face is lovely."*

Across the world right now are millions of people who wish they knew this name. They wish they knew the name which turns God's head. They wish they knew the name which gives them access and makes them acceptable and right before God. They wish they knew the name that would make them Beloved of God.

It is no small thing to know the name of Jesus. It is no small thing to be able to pray to The Most High, and have your prayers come up to Him through that name.

Praying in Jesus' name is not saying the words. It means believing that He is the one to whom you are praying. It is depending on His righteousness to give you access. It is depending on His relationship with the Father to cause you to be in a favoured, loved, gracious position.