

Title: When Does God answer Prayer?

Text: Luke 11:1-10

Take your Bible, please and turn to Luke chapter 11. Luke chapter 11. The second subject in our series on prayer: WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER ? WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

R.A. Torry, one of the greatest Bible teachers ever in this country, very influential in the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, that later became BIOLA University, Dr. Torry commented on why God used D.L. Moody. D.L. Moody was not well trained, was not educated, was not eloquent. Did not seem to have a lot of social grace. But, D.L. Moody was used by God in a mighty way. And R. A. Torry wrote these words about D.L. Moody. "The reason D.L. Moody was used by God was because he was in the deepest sense a man of prayer."

Many people remember Moody primarily as a great preacher. He preached to more people than all previous history had recorded. According to Dr. Torry, he was a far greater man of prayer than he was a preacher. His prayers were not marked by any theological sophistication. They were simple, trustful, definite, direct, persistent in their intercession. And often seemed child-like. Moody, himself, said: "I would rather be able to pray like David than to preach with ^{the} eloquence of Gabriel.

When Moody was confronted with large scale problems..financial, administratively...problems that seem insurmountable, things people said could never be done, yet, Moody believed that nothing was impossible with God. Upon hearing things that could not be done, Moody would always call a few friends together to pray.

Torry writes: "I wonder how many ministries in America could be absolutely changed by God if they just knew one thing, that Moody knew, that God answers prayer....AMEN!"

And I was strick with the fact that the founder of BIOLA University : the Rev. Thomas C. Horton, wrote a book on prayer called the "POTENCY OF PRAYER". And in reading this book one cannot help but notice that the formative years of BIOLA WAS BATHED IN PRAYER. He siad that it pleased God to put in his Holy Word in plain definite terms the meaning and the purpose and the power of prayer. And to give the fullest assurance of His desrie to hear the request and to supply the needs of his own. If there could come to the church a revival of prayer, in which the whole body of believers would unite, there would surely come, not just showers of blessings, but the abundant rain that would refresh the souls of saints, revolutionize the church, and make glad the heart of the Lord who gave His life for fallen people.

It was said of John Hide, who is known in history not only as a great missionary to India, but became known as "praying Hide." It was said of him by a classmate that he did not excell as a student and when he went to India as a missionary most people felt he would not make it, he gave no promise of being the remarkable missionary that he turned out to be. He lacked enthusisasm, he lacked zeal, which everyone said that a missionary starting a work in a country like India would need. But, a mighty change took place in John Hide's life when he learned on the mission field that there was only one thing that really worked. And that was PRAYER> With in a faew short years thousands of people came to know Christ under this man who became

known as the APOSTLE OF PRAYER. THE work of winning people to Christ became a passion in his life. And he said that it came on his knees. Shaken with tears, many times as he prayed, friends would hear him cry, "OH, GOD, GIVE ME SOULS OR I DIE.

THE MORE HE PRAYED the greater became his passion for souls. And the results were large numbers of people coming to the Lord.

If only the church today could grasp the meaning of prayer in God's program, and be willing to pay the price. Dear friends there is one thing that God blesses more than anything else, and that is prayer.

Luke chapter 11 is an amazing story by our Lord Jesus Christ about prayer. Luke chapter 11 beginning with Vs 1...It says....

(Read 11:1-13)

Will you join me, please, in prayer.

Father in heaven you know more than any one of us here today. You know how much we need to pray. And as the disciples ask, long ago, so do we ask: Lord, TEACH US TO PRAY. Lord there seems to be an idea among Christians that prayer doesn't work. And it seems that there is more talk about prayer than there is prayer. Lord, help us to understand this morning that you are a God who answers prayer. And as we evaluate from your Word when it is that you do answer, God encourage our hearts. And give to us a desire to pray about all the burdens and problems and situations and concerns in our life, like we have never prayed before. We thank you Lord

for what you are going to do. In Jesus name...Amen.

WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? Now, I want to give you 7 answers to that question. Answers from the Bible. WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

I don't think there is a question that so grieves the heart of God's people as WHY DOESN'T GOD ANSWER MY PRAYER?

People says, "I have been praying for this a long time and nothing has happened. Why doesn't God answer my pray?"

(1) Turn, please, to John chapter 14. The first answer to the question, WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER, is stated by our Lord, Jesus, a number of times..
But very beatifully and clearly in John 14 beginning at Vs 13.

God answers prayer when we pray in Jesus name. God answers prayer when we pray in Jesus name.

Now, we are not talking here about tacking on that statement at the end of your prayer. Although I believe that is correct and should be done. When we pray we end our prayers with the words.."IN THE NAME OF JESUS, AMEN."

But, I believe we are not talking simply about the title "IN THE NAME OF JESUS." WE HAVE SOMETHING FAR MORE IMPORTANT. Not that that is not important. But we are talking about the application of who he is. When we pray in Jesus name, God says He answers prayer.

John 14:13 says, "And whatever you ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me, anything in my name, I will do it."

Look, please, back to chapter 12 verse 23 and let me show you something. Apparently praying in Jesus name is to pray in order that God the Father be glorified. It is interesting as you trace this in the context of John 14. In John 12:23 Jesus said "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."

Now, look at chapter 13 verse 26 as the disciples gathered for the passover,.....(Read Vs 26-33)

Look at chapter 15, please, vs 16..Jesus said, "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 of the Father in My name, He may give to you."

Chapter 16, please, verse 23...(Read Vs 23-24)

Chapter 17 verse 1..(Read 1-5)

Now, back to chapter 14 and look at it one more time with new eye sight. It says in John 14:13 "And whatever you ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

If you have followed the thought, the Lord Jesus clearly said, that the hour is going to come when God is going to be glorified. And God is

going to glorify me.

At the time of the last supper when Judas leaves the room, Jesus said NOW THE SON OF GOD IS GLORIFIED. AND NOW IS THE FATHER GLORIFIED.

WHY? Because prophecy was being fulfilled. The prophecy about the hand who was with me at the table will betray me. Prophecy from the O.T. was fulfilled. And the time of the death of Jesus was at hand. And he said that this is the time when God is going to glorify me.

And all though this txt, as you read it, and see the context, you begin to understand what prayer IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST is all about. It is praying that God would be glorified. And God was glorified through all of these events: the trail, the crucifixion, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we pray IN JESUS NAME, we are giving glory to God. Because we in fact are trusting what God has done to bring glory to himself.

Let me put it to you another way. Most praying is not in Jesus name because the end result or the motive on the way to that end is really a glorification of man. Even in a good thing. It does not seek to glorify God. God is to be glorified in all things. And Jesus said, "When you ask in my name, the Father will be glorified. In my name is more than just a title. It is referring to the whole ministry and work and authority of Jesus Christ.

Does your pray center in on the purpose of Jesus Christ who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Does what we are asking God to do,

whatever we ask in the name of Jesus, that the Father be glorified. Does it in fact accomplish the purposes of God. Or, is it something you want God to do in your life simply because you want it done?

My friends, this is a very serious matter. When we pray in the name of Jesus, on His authority, after His mission, after His purpose, that God would be glorified.

And all the way through the text, and I could give you a lot more reference, that it is a constant theme; God is being glorified by the death; and the suffering and the trial and betrayal, everything that is going on, and God's purposes are being honored. So, when we pray in Jesus name we are saying, GOD, YOU BE GLORIFIED. THAT YOUR PURPOSES, WHICH MAYBE UNKNOWN TO ME, WOULD BE FULFILLED IN MY LIFE AND IN THE LIVES OF THOSE FOR WHOM I AM PRAYING.

That is a very important principle. WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAY? VERY CLEARLY..when we pray in Jesus name, to glorify the Father through that prayer.

(2) Number two, turn to I John chapter 5. WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

In 1 John 5:14 and 15 we get a second reason as to when God answers prayer. And that is when we pray according to his will. 1 John 5 verse 14 says "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Now, that is automatic. If you ask me, "does God answer prayer." Well, I could answer that God, because He is sovereign, certainly hears everything that a person might pray. There is not an idol word that He doesn't know about. But can you really say that God answers the prayer of everybody? The answer to that is no. Absolutely not.

Now, it kind of comforts some of us to say that God answers YES, NO, AND MAYBE. But, I just want you to know that the Bible never says that. In fact the Bible says that God, for example, doesn't answer the prayers of the wicked. We had better wake

We will talk later about some of those hindrances. But, just don't think that God is automatic, like He is some great puppet in the sky, pull the right string and "bang" he does what you want.

The Bible says. Whatever you ask according to His will He hears. Not just listens to...The idea is harkening to and doing something about it. You could translate "answer" there. We are not just talking about someone who hears it because He hears all things. We are talking about someone who answers it. He harkens to anybody who prays according to his will.

Now, you have this assurance that if you could just line your prayers

up with what the will of God is, you have automatic answers. That is pretty good isn't it?

Now, look at Vs 15.. "And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

Now, how does a person speak confidently, "I KNOW THAT WHAT I ASK OF THE LORD, IS GOING TO HAPPENED? Because you ask according to His will. Now, be carefull here because you could just tack it on the end of your prayer just to make sure you got it in.

Like.. "Lord, I want you to do this. And of course if it be your will." Do you understand? We do this many times without thinking. "Lord, I want your will no matter what.

UN, Lord, I need a new cadillac. I am telling you.. What can I say. Lord, I know you wouldn't want me to drive something junky because I am a son of the king... AMEN!..

DO you read that in the Bible? Hay! I don't read that in the Bible. Lord, you know that I cannot work for mimimum wage. You know that, Lord!..... REALLY!.. Maybe He wants you to.

PRAY ACCORDING TO HIS WILL.. THAT IS WHAT IT SAYS.. NOW, YOU TELL ME, where is an acturate expression of the will of God? ANYONE!!! It is right in the Bible. How many times do we ever check this book to see if we are really praying in the will of God?

Isn't it amazing that God often just probably because of his grace to bless us, answers our prayers when in fact they can't be proven that they are in His will. Have you noticed that?

How can you prove that it is God's will to give you a hundred dollars? There is no verse that says that. How can you say that is the will of God? And I have found that God often does that. He gives someone a hundred dollars right at the time that they need it. And he doesn't have to. Why does God do that?

I like what a friend of mine said in answering that question...He said God does that to mess your brain up. So that you never think that you know. You see, God is in charge. But there is one thing for sure. If you do want God to answer your prayer, then line it up with the will of God. There are things in the Bible that are clearly the known revealed word of God. But, the question is: do we take time to look at that?

(3) Number three. Turn to Mark chapter 11. Mark chapter 11. WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

When we pray in Jesus name to glorify God, the Father. And secondly, when we pray according to His will. What he wants to do.

MARK CHAPTER 11 verse 20...(READ VS 20-24) How about that? May be some of those wacko preachers are don't so bad after all. You know those guys who say, "You claim it, you can have it."

Have you ever heard that? I listen to one on the radio. Shouldn't have done that. Mkes me mad.

Listen folks, God answers prayer when we pray with faith. But, you don't set aside praying in Jesus name. You don't set aside praying according to his will. Yopu don't set aside that the fiath is not in yourself and your abillity to believe it ,but in God.

There is a sudle influence in our culture that some how people of great faith are being honored by God in answering their prayers. I don't see that at all in the Bibl. In fact all the examples in the Bible explain it to me that most of us don't have much faith at all. We are talking little faith. Jesus said, "listen, you guys don't have much, but even if its is a little tiny mustered seed, I mean you jcould do a lot better than you are ddoing now.

the Centurian said, "Lord, I baelieve, help my unbelief." Where are these great believers in our midst. I don't read in the Bible that great faith is honored by God. I read that what God honors is faith in a great God. There is a lot of difference in that. Jesus didn't say, "Have faith in your ability to believe." NO WAY! He said have faith in God.

"Just believe it and it will happen". NO! He didn't say that either. He said Have faith in God. YOU see, he who made the mountain could remove it. If you really believe in who God is. ...You prayed and it was his will...and it was in the name of Jesus..and you prayed it, that mountain could literally be moved by God. WHY? Because he made the mountain. He could move it if he wanted to.

Turn to Hebrews chapter 11. Let's develop this point a little bit more. Because it is critical. You hear the message all the time. You need to believe God. And that is true. What ever you ask in faith believing, you shall receive.

Hebrews chapter 11 look at Vs 6.. "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God ;must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

It is the character of God that we believe. It is the power of God that we believe. Not our ability to believe it. But Him. And I am afraid that whether we like it or not, we cannot fool God. We can say to someone, "Boy, I really believe this is going to happen."

Several years ago during the height of the california ^{drought} ~~draft~~, I participated in a prayer meeting. And in this meeting we were praying for rain. And it just caught me kind off funny that we all came to this meeting to pray for rain. But, no one brought an umbrilla. (ha)

It is kind off interesting, isn't it. That we pray for something but we

don't believe it is really going to happen.

Now you can show yourself and others by saying, "I am going to take an umbrella to work today and show everybody that I believe it is going to rain. And if it doesn't you probably will not bring it tomorrow.

No, it is not some act of ours that demonstrates that we really believe. You see, it is coming to God and believing in who he is. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

But, if you think it is your ability, some how, to believe it, or to claim it, or to demand it, you are going to be greatly disappointed in life.

When we pray we pray with faith. But, not faith in ourselves. And not in our ability to believe it. But in God.

Turn to James chapter 1 and let me show you an analysis of this problem. James chapter 1 verses 6 to 8. The problem here deals with wisdom. If you lack wisdom, ask of God. Now, this is the will of God. God wants you to be wise. So, you can ask God for wisdom and you would be asking for the right thing. Does He answer that prayer? YES...IF WE NEED wisdom in the body of Christ...Let's say, we have a Board meeting or some committee meeting that needs some wisdom, it is correct to ask God for that wisdom. And God said that is right on target. I will give it to you. What a wonderful thing. You would think that that would cause us to be more on our knees, wouldn't you? God said that he will give us wisdom.

Now, it is interesting that when he analyses that in Vs 6. He says, "But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord."

Here is a reason why we don't get our prayers answered when we think that we are asking in faith. WHY? VS 8 "being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." Literally it is a double souled man. The soul. It means you are going in two directions. You are saying one thing with your mouth, but your heart is going in another direction.

And the person who says that he is asking in faith, Yet he doubts in what he says. The word "doubt" means to "divid". And it separates. It separates that which God can do from what I see in my circumstances.

And aren't there a lot of us who do not see any answers in our circumstances. And therefore we really don't believe in God through we continue to pray? I really believe that prayer can become a routine. If your circumstances and events as you know them, if they are now controlling you and your life and your prospective of prayer, your heart is going in that direction.. "Well I have never seen it". "And this is what I have experienced. And I just don't think that is going to happen.": Then you are in a sense hypocritical by saying, "Lord! we believe you can answer prayer."

You see, he is a double souled person. He is going in two directions. Let not that man think he is going to get anything from the Lord. God is honored when we believe that He can do it. ..AMEN!...You actually believe that he can do it. When we pray with faith God says that he will answer.

(4)Number four. Turn to John 15, please. John 15 verse 7 and 8. WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? (1) One, when we pray in Jesus name to glorify God. (2) Two, when we pray according to His will. His will is revealed in his word. (3)Three, when we pray with faith. Not faith in our ability to believe. But faith in God and who He is and what He can do. Trusting Him, Understanding what He says in His Word. What He will do and what he will not do.

(4) Number four. John 15 verses 7 and 8. God answers prayer when we abide in him and his word abides in us. Vs 7 and 8. Wonderful words of encouragement. Jesus said, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father

glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

I would like to point out in case some of you have already made a connection with point number one. This is still in the context of that first point. All talking about how God is glorified. And Jesus said in John 14 "whatever you ask in my name that I will do that the Father maybe glorified. And here much the same thing. "If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is my Father glorified."

I look at that and I ask, WHAT IS THE NEED HERE? First of all, when he said "if you abide in me" does that mean that they are not christians and he is urging them to become christians? I DON'T THINK SO!

When he says "my words abide in you" what does that mean? Let's start with that one. It maybe a little easier. It means the Word of God, inself, and what Jesus taught us is now making its home in my life. So that my thoughts and my desires and my choices are being dominated and governored by the Word of God.

Is the Word of God controlling your life? Is it really at home in you?

And if I abide in Christ that means I am making my home in Him. Let me put it another way. I am comfortable with the Lord Jesus dominating and controlling my life. HOW ABOUT YOU? Is He your best friend? Are you comfortable with the fact that you are a christian? Or, are there moments

when you sort of hid it and keep it from others. You know, you become a secret service Christian....(AMEN)

Why is it that we are so uncomfortable with our Lord, Jesus Christ? Jesus said, "Don't be ashamed of me and my words." Paul said "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes."

Are you ashamed of the gospel and what He is and what His word says? Jesus said, "If you abide in me, you make your home in me, you are really comfortable with me, and my word has been making its home in you, then you may ask whatever you want to and I will do it."

WOW! You talk about friend to friend. Isn't that fantastic? What a relationship with God.

(5)Number five. Turn to 2 Chronicles 7:14. 2 Chronicles 7:14. WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? One, when we pray in Jesus name to glorify God. Two, when we pray according to His will.

Three, when we pray with faith.

Four, when we abide in Him and His words abide in us.

AND NUMBER FIVE..WHEN WE PRAY WITH HUMILITY. 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, "and my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? When we pray with humility.

Turn to Luke chapter 18. Jesus gave a parable on prayer regarding humility. Luke chapter 18 and look at Vs 9..Jesus, also, spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.

Hay! I want to tell you that if that is your attitude, you can forget about being powerful in prayer. ..Vs 10...(Read Vs 10-14)

Turn to James chapter 4. James chapter 4. When does God answer prayer? The one who prays with humility. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.

James 4 verse 7 says ..(Read Vs 7-10)

We could talk for a long time about humility. And still not grasp it all. That is for sure. Humility is a lesson that is never learned. Have you ever thought about that? The moment you think you have mastered what the Bible says about it, in that moment is the quite temptation of the enemy to be proud about what you know about humility. You can be proud that you are humble. (Ha) Do you understand that?

There are always people in the body of Christ who believe that they are divinely commissioned by God to point out the folks that are not humble. Have you noticed that? Listen, there is enough stuff from our sovereign God in his hand for every one of us to make us humble without any help from any other believer. Did you know that?

God is going to see to it. Now, you can either humble yourself or guess what? God is going to do it. He is going to humble you.

I like what one writer says about the Luke 18 parable and I believe this captures it. When we pray with humility we beat our breast as a penitent sinner. And realize that there is not an ounce of worthiness in us, as to why God should answer our prayers.

It ought to be a miracle in our hearts that God answers any of our prayers. We ought to be grateful from the bottom of our hearts for any little display of God's sovereign power, answering one of our prayers. Can you imagine it? We, sinners that we are, that God would answer our prayer. He doesn't have to answer our prayer. Who do we think we are. PRAY WITH HUMILITY, GOD SAYS. HUMBLE YOURSELF AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP.

(6) Number 6. Turn to Proverbs 28 verse 9. Proverbs 28 verse 9. WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAY?

When we pray in Jesus name to glorify God.

When we pray according to His will.

When we pray in faith

When we abide in Him and His word abides in us.

When we pray with humility.

(6) And number six, when we are obedient to His Word. Proverbs 28:9 says, "He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination."

WOW! Your prayers will be an abomination to God, if you are disobedient to a known principle in God's Word. You turn your heart away from what God says. And your prayer is an abomination, God says.

Turn to I John, please, chapter 3. I John chapter 3 and look at Vs 22 "and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight."

In reading this verse I really got excited. Because if I am reading that verse correctly it means that God really wants to answer my prayers. He really does. If I do what is pleasing to him, God really does want to answer my prayers. God delights in those who desire, "I want to please the Lord in my life. I will do what he wants me to do." Lord, help me to follow your commandments." God delights in answering that prayer. When we are obedient to his Word, God answers prayer.

7) Now, turn to Psalm 115 for the seventh and final answer to the question

WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? And this is the one that I like the most.

17)Now, turn to Psalm 115 for the seventh and final answer to the question: WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? And this is the one that I like the most. I don't here it much. But here is the answer. WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? Number seven: WHEN EVER HE WANTS TO. (ha)

In Psalm 115 verse 3 it says, "But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases." Jesus said, "here is what you do when you pray." "Our Father, who are in heaven, HALLOWED...Santified...totally set apart...is your name." It is recognizing the soverienty of God. God I have no idea what you are going to do, but I know you will do whatever you want to do. And I just want to tell you. THANK YOU for doing what you do.

You hear a pray like that and you say, "wait a minute. You didn't ask Him for anything."

Hay, he does what he wants to anyway. I just want to tell him THANK YOU. "God, thank you for that stress factor in my life. I don't understand it. But, you must have had a reason. So, I just thank you and praise you for it.

"That person has been saying some alfull things about me. And Lord, I just want to praise you for it. It was a wonderful blessing from you. Praise the Lord. It sounds funny to us and ridiculous. And I am not trying to be funny here. But, the Bible does say that in everything give thanks. And this is the will of God.

It is funny how we can hear something and then not apply it. The Bible says that God does whatever he pleases.

Turn to Psalm 135...Psalm 135 and notice Vs 5.."For I know that the Lord is great. And that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps."

He does whatever He wants.

Let me ask you a question. DO YOU THINK THAT GOD HAS DONE WHAT HE WANTS TO DO IN YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

I think that is an interesting question. I wouldn't have ask that question except that I heard a guy on radio preaching. And he was talking about trusting God to do great things. We are always hoping that we can really do something wonderful tomorrow. Or, that God is going to do something great in my life next week.

But, let me put it to you another way. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE WHATEVER HE WANTS TO DO IN YOUR LIFE SO FAR? Do you believe that?

Now, it depends on whether things you are thinking about are category good or category bad in your view. RIGHT? DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT GOD IS DOING WHATEVER HE WANTS?

Dear friends, we need to come to that point in our attitude. God will do whatever He wants to do. WHATEVER HE WANTS TO DO. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT? If you do, it will effect our prayer life.

LET'S CLOSE WITH A WORD OF PRAYER