The prayer of faith

1. Introduction

a. In this series we began by considering why scripture based prayers are a foundational value of the House of Prayer and how they enable us to connect with God's heart and partner with His desires. Over the weeks we have looked at 7 different prayers Paul prayed for the churches he wrote to and have continued to use these prayers during our times of worship and intercession. (Eph.1:17-20; Eph.3:14-19; Phil.1:9-11; Col.1:9-12; 2Thess.1:11-12; 2Thess.2:16-3:5; Romans 15:5-6,13.) In this, we express our agreement with the Lord. In worship we agree with ***who He is,*** and in intercession we agree with ***what He promised to do***.

b. However, we need to realise that praying these prayers isn't just some secret formula. Over the years many have prayed biblical prayers by rote e.g. the Lord's prayer, without any personal relationship with the Lord and therefore no expectation of seeing the Lord fulfil what He has promised. For prayer to be effective it needs to be prayed with faith.

2. The prayer of faith

James 5:15 *And the* ***prayer of faith*** *will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*

a. We are to pray in faith so that our prayers will actually produce results, believing that God will answer them by releasing a greater measure of His blessing and power. The prayer of faith involves our confidence in the *authority of Jesus* over every opposing power. The prayer of faith is faith that the Man who rose from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father has all authority. We believe that truth when we pray. There is no obstacle so big that it can stop the will of God.

b. However, it is more than confidence in the authority of Jesus. It is confidence in the *blood of Jesus* to fully qualify weak and broken people like us to stand in His presence and to be vessels of His glory. It is also more than that we are qualified. It is confidence that it is *God's desire*. The Father desires to manifest His glory, His resource, and His ways though His people. He desires it more than we desire it. Sometimes we think we are convincing God, and God is the one convincing us.

c. Jesus taught on faith as a foundational kingdom principle (Mt. 8:10, 13, 26; 9:2, 22, 29; 14:31; 15:28; 16:8; 17:20; 21:21; Mk. 2:5; 4:40; 5:34; 9:23; 10:52; 11:22-24; Lk. 5:20; 7:9, 50; 8:25, 48; 12:28; 17:5-6, 19; 18:8, 42; 22:32). As we believe Him for more of His promises, we will experience more of God's activity and provision for us, and we will enjoy our relationship with Him more. Jesus was unable to do mighty works where there was great unbelief (Mk. 6:5-6).

d. We want to intentionally cultivate growing in faith by hearing and speaking God's word.

Rom. 10:17 *So then <u>faith comes by hearing</u>, and hearing by the word of God.*

e. We must want to grow in faith and cultivate it intentionally. We cultivate it by hearing the Word and by speaking the Word. Faith comes by hearing. Not just hearing the Word from somebody else, like a Bible teacher, but out of our own mouth when we speak the Word of God over our own heart, our circumstances, and against the attack of the enemy.

f. There are two big extremes that we want to avoid. One is humanistic, positive-thinking. Really that is faith in human ability. Our confidence is in our relationship with Jesus, really believing what He said. We believe in that covenant relationship with covenant benefits. It is more than mind over matter, it is believing a real man who is fully God and fully man. Believing the eternal Word of God.

The other extreme is just to settle down into unbelief and live in the consequences of unbelief that are really devastating.

Heb. 11:1 *Now faith is the substance [title deed] of things hoped for …*

g. Faith is the title deed of those things we are hoping will be manifested in our natural lives in this age and in the age to come. Every biblical promise read in its proper context is like being given the title deed ahead of time.

1 John 5:14 *This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*

h. When Scripture states that God *hears* our prayers, it means that He *approves* of our requests. When we pray according to God's promises and His will, we can have confidence that He approves of the request. It is at this time that we "receive" the request in the spirit realm.

i. Jesus described how faith operates. He indicated that we receive our prayers in two ways. First, we "receive" them in the spirit realm (v. 24b), and then "have" them in the natural (v. 24c).

Mark 11:23-24 *[23]"…whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart [because of evidence from the Spirit] but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. [24]Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them [in the spirit], and you will have them [in the natural]."*

j. We need to be aware of the distinction between the spiritual and the natural realms to understand how faith and prayer work together. We engage in faith for God's promises or requests that we have "received" in the spirit. Jesus spoke of continually believing that we have received the "title deed" (in the spirit realm) to our requests as the condition for receiving them in the natural realm.

3. Five principles in praying in faith

a. We can identify five principles related to having a biblical perspective for praying with faith. There is no place in Scripture that provides a 1-2-3 guide to prayer, however, these five steps form a biblical framework to help us understand how faith and perseverance relate to prayer.

b. ***Step One***: Verbalise your requests to the Father. Many *think* about a prayer request without actually *praying* for it. God knows our needs (Mattt. 6:32), but requires that we ask Him for them—asking causes us to connect with His heart and to recognise specific blessings as His answer to our prayers. Asking causes us to know that what we say *both* moves His heart *and* matters to Him.

Phil. 4:6 *…in everything by prayer…with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God…*

James 4:2 *Yet you do not have because you do not ask.*

c. ***Step Two***: Receive your requests in the spirit realm. When Scripture states that God *hears* our prayers, it means that He *approves* of our requests. When we pray according to God's will, we know that He approves of the request, so we are to *receive it in the spirit realm* with confidence.

1 John 5:14 *This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*

d. God has already given us every spiritual blessing that exists in the heavenly realm

Eph. 1:3 *Father…has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*

e. These blessings include the indwelling Spirit, the right to use Jesus's authority, the promise of God's provision, protection, and direction to do His will, and more.

f. ***Step Three***: Engage in faith that you have received what you asked for. Jesus spoke of the necessity of *continually believing* that we have received the "title deed" (in the spirit realm) to our prayer requests as the condition for receiving them in the natural realm.

Mark 11:24 "*Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, <u>believe that you receive them</u> [in the spirit], and you will have them [in the natural]*"

g. ***Step Four***: Ask with persistence (Luke 11:8), or thank God, or remind Him of His Word (Isa. 62:6). We ask the Lord to release a blessing *in a greater measure* in the natural realm, or we thank Him for it or remind the Lord consistently of what He has already given us in the spirit realm.

Isa. 62:6-7 *You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest,[7] and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth.*

h. In prayer, put the Lord in remembrance of His Word and what He has given us in the spirit realm in Christ–that which He has promised to give us related to our circumstances.

Isa. 43:26 *Put me in remembrance; let us argue (contend) together; set forth your case, that you may be proved right.*

i. Prayer is not about informing or persuading God, but about conversing and connecting with Him relationally. We believe God has approved of our prayer and released it to us in the spirit realm; therefore, we never stop reminding Him of it and thanking Him for it.

j. Jesus emphasised the value of perseverance in asking Him to release His blessings in a greater measure in the natural (Mt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:5-10; 18:1, 7). Jesus taught a parable (Lk. 11:5-10) to show the value of asking with perseverance. The verbs Jesus used are in the *present continuous tense*, meaning that we are to ask and keep on asking (v. 9).

Luke 11:8-9 *[8]…<u>because of his persistence</u> he will rise and give him as many as he needs… [9]<u>ask</u>, and it will be given to you; <u>seek</u>, and you will find…*

k. We ask persistently that the request be manifest in a *greater measure* in the natural realm. We do not ask God to give us the spiritual blessings that He has already given to us in the spirit realm; rather, we ask Him to release them in a greater measure in the natural realm.

l. Paul called us to pray *with all perseverance.* Therefore, we should never stop asking, reminding, and thanking God until we see the answers to our requests with our eyes.

Eph. 6:18 *[18]…praying always…being watchful to this end with <u>all perseverance</u>…*

m. ***Step Five***: Receive your requests in the natural realm. Prayers that are in God's will are always answered in God's timing and way, so do not give up too quickly if the answer is delayed.

n. How does faith grow? By hearing and speaking God's Word. We are to confess the Word over our heart and our circumstances and against the works of the enemy. We ask with persistence (Luke 11:8), or thank God, or remind Him of His promises (Isa. 62:6) for what He has given us in the spirit realm.

4. The Authority of the Believer

a. One practical area of faith we need to understand is commonly called the authority of the believer. As believers we are connected to Jesus by the Holy Spirit and have His authority delegated to us. We can use that authority to stop the works of darkness and to release the works of God but we have to engage in it. Some people think we can whisper a prayer one time and it all happens but there needs to be an ongoing engagement with confidence of the authority we have in Christ.

b. The gospel has qualified us to freely receive God's love, power, favour, and many other benefits. We experience these benefits by faith—confident agreement—in Jesus' work on the cross.

Rom. 1:16 *…For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation[from the penalty and power of sin and Satan] for everyone who believes…*

c. On the cross, Jesus gained victory over Satan for us, removing his *legal right* to torment us.

Col. 2:15 *He disarmed the rulers and authorities[b] and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (his death and resurrection)*

1 John 3:8 *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*

d. We have been transferred to God's kingdom and qualified to freely receive new benefits.

Col. 1:13 *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.*

e. Jesus gave authority to His Church over the works of Satan. Authority is delegated power. A police officer stops a car by the authority of the government (backed up by the military).

Luke 10:19 *Behold, I have given you authority …… over all the power of the enemy....*

f. We have the keys or authority in Jesus' name to bind or stop demonic activity and to loose or release God's power.

Matt. 16:19 *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be (shall have been) bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be (shall have been) loosed in heaven.*

g. Satan's attacks will continue unless we resist them using our authority in Christ. We take our stand against the devil, resisting him by speaking the Word.

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

1 Pet. 5:8-9 *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] Resist him, firm in your faith, ….*

h. Walking in victory includes an element of "wrestling" in our resistance of Satan's attacks. We must maintain the ground we take from the enemy, knowing that demons return to attack again (Mt. 12:43-45). We employ the *shield of faith* and the *sword of the Spirit* by speaking God's Word. Satan's fiery darts strike us as irrationally heightened feelings of fear, anger, lust, oppression, anxiety, etc. We resist demonic influences by declaring the Word against them.

Eph. 6:12-17 *[12]We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers…in the heavenly places…[16]taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one…[17]Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God…*

i. The word is our sword. It's as we pray the word that we are able to overcome the schemes of the enemy and see the promises that we have received in the Spirit manifested in the natural. You can't be a "prayer warrior" without spending time in the Word and engaging with it in conversation with the Lord.

j. And finally, hear these words of Jesus:

Luke 18:1 *"Men ought always to pray and not lose heart."* – until He comes – Maranatha.