

THE SUBSTANCE OF PRAYER

Mark 11:20-24

**“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”
(Revelation 3:20)**

“He knocks in order to move us by prayer to open the door and accept the gift which He has already appointed for us”

“To pray is to ... let Jesus into our needs. To pray is to give Jesus permission to employ His powers [in our life] ... To pray is to let Jesus glorify His name in [us]”

(*Prayer* by O. Hallesby)

THE HEART OF PRAYER

- ⦿ Intimate fellowship with God
- ⦿ God the initiator of prayer
- ⦿ Listening and responding in love
- ⦿ Context: our human frailty

“Prayer consists in simply telling God day by day in what ways we feel that we are helpless. We are moved to pray every time the Spirit of God, which is the spirit of prayer, emphasizes anew to us our helplessness, and we realise how impotent we are by nature to believe, to love, to hope, to serve, to sacrifice, to suffer, to read the Bible, to pray and to struggle against our sinful desires.”

(*Prayer* by O. Hallesby)

THE SUBSTANCE OF PRAYER

“And without **faith** it is impossible to please God...” (Hebrews 11:6)

MARK 11:20-24

CONTEXT

- ⦿ Cursing and destruction of a fig tree by Jesus
- ⦿ A pointless display of power
- ⦿ Prophetic sign of God's judgment
- ⦿ **Lesson on prayer and faith**

LESSON TAUGHT

Hyperbole - throwing a mountain into the sea

➤ Whatever that seems humanly impossible is made possible through praying in faith.

‘WHATEVER’

Does Jesus really mean that we can have whatever we ask so long as we believe it?



Faith is trusting in Jesus and letting him into your heart.

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”

(John 15:7)

‘Whatever’ does not refer to absolutely everything we ask; it refers to **anything that is in harmony with the will of God (1 John 5:14) as we abide in Christ and Christ in us (John 15:7).**

MARK 11:23

“(Whoever) does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”

UNDOUBTING FAITH

Is it possible to have such undoubting faith?



WHICH IS WORSE?

1. To not pray
2. To pray for the wrong things



Faith is trusting in Jesus and letting him into your heart.

“The essence of faith is to come to Christ... we have faith enough when we in our helplessness turn to Jesus.”

(*Prayer* by O. Hallesby)

UNDOUBTING FAITH

Mark 9:14-29

Man: “But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

Jesus: “‘If you can!’ All things are possible for one who believes.”

Man: “I believe; help my unbelief!”

UNBELIEF

“And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.”

(Mark 6:4-6)

DOUBTING FAITH ≠ UNBELIEF

- ⦿ Faith is not the absence of doubt; it's the presence of trust.
- ⦿ **“Doubt always coexists with faith, for in the presence of certainty who would need faith at all?”**
(Philip Yancey)
- ⦿ Faith is evident when we **persevere in our prayer** even when we have all the questions but no answers.

“I need not exert myself and try to force myself to believe, or try to chase doubt out of my heart. Both are equally useless. It begins to daunt on me that I can bring everything to Jesus, no matter how difficult it is; and I **need not be frightened away by my doubts or my weak faith, but only tell Jesus how weak my faith is.** I have let Jesus into my heart. And He will fulfill my heart’s desire.”

(Prayer by O. Hallesby)

THE SUBSTANCE OF PRAYER: FAITH

“Therefore I tell you, **whatever** you ask for in prayer, **believe** that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

- ⦿ Whatever that seems humanly impossible is made possible through praying in faith.
- ⦿ Faith is trusting in Jesus and letting him into your heart. Persevere in prayer in the midst of doubts.