

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

August 5, 2018

Issue 21

HOW DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYERS? (II)

Ronnie Scherffius

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.” (Prov. 15:8)

Last week we noted from Paul’s prayer to “be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea” (Rom. 15:31) that God sometimes answers our prayers with a resounding “No.” While we may be disappointed with such an answer we must remember that this neither means that God does not hear us, nor that God does not love or has forsaken us. God knows the end of all things and His will and purposes are greater than ours. An answer of “No” to our prayer simply means “No.” But thankfully God also answers our prayers in the positive.

In answer to our prayers God sometimes says “Yes.” Paul prayed that the Gentile’s show of loving kindness would be accepted by the Jewish Christians: “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and **that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints**” (Rom. 15:30-31).

Paul’s fear was that his relationship with the Gentiles would hinder his efforts to help the Jewish brethren, which benevolence would also help to bring unity in the church. He was the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). He had been received as such by some brethren (Gal. 2:9), but among other of the Jewish Christians this caused problems (Acts 11:1ff).

In answer to Paul’s prayer the gift was received and much good was done: “And when

we were come to Jerusalem, **the brethren received us gladly**. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, **they glorified the Lord**” (Acts 21:17-20). Writing of the benefits of this benevolent act on the part of the Gentile Christians toward their Jewish brethren Paul informed the Corinthians: “For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men” (2 Cor. 9:12-14).

Sometimes God says “Yes” to our prayers. How should we respond in such cases? Certainly, we should be thankful: “Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thess. 5:17-18). Secondly, be generous with the blessings which God has given (Luke 12:16-21).

In answer to our prayers God sometimes says “Not your way, but Mine.” Paul prayed both for deliverance from the unbelieving Jews, for a good reception by the Jews of the gift from the Gentile saints, and “That I may come unto you [Rome] with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed” (Rom. 15:30-32). In answer to this prayer God answered “Yes,” but it is certain that the fulfillment is not at all what Paul had in mind!

Paul desired to go to Rome for many reasons. A large Jewish population provided a ready field in which to plant the gospel; the Christians there needed the encouragement (Nero was emperor at this time!); and from Rome, Paul intended to launch a missionary campaign into Spain (Rom. 15:23-24). Paul did travel to Rome—but his travels were likely not what he expected them to be! He was first taken into custody by the Romans because of an attack on him by the Jews (Acts 21:27–22:30); after being reassured by the Lord that he would in fact go to Rome (Acts 23:11), he was transferred by night from Jerusalem to Caesarea where he remained in prison for two years (Acts 23:12–25:27). When traveling to Rome he was shipwrecked (Acts 27); stranded on an island for three months where he was bitten by a snake (Acts 28:1-11). When he finally arrived in Rome he was in chains (Acts 28:20) and he remained in Roman custody for another two years (Acts 28:30-31) until he stood before Nero...BUT he did make it to Rome!

In answer to our prayers God sometimes says, “Yes,” but “Not your way but mine.” How do we respond in such cases? First, examine the situation and ask yourself, “What blessings might lie ahead for me or others from the circumstances?” Though in chains, Paul had free course for two years to preach (at Rome’s expense!); he had time to write letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon—and some suggest Galatians also) of encouragement/instruction.

Another question to ask is, “Will the church be helped from this answer to my prayer?” Paul wrote that because of his bonds many were “much more bold to speak the word without fear” (Phil. 1:12-14). Because of Paul’s situation in Rome there were Christians even “of Caesar’s household” (Phil. 4:22). Consider also that such an answer could be a time to grow personally: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2-4). Finally, let such an an-

swer remind you that God is the Ruler in the kingdom of men (Dan. 5:24).

There may be times when we feel as David: “thou hearest not” (Psalm 22:2) because we can’t see our prayers answered or because they are not answered the way that we want them. We need but remember the words of the wise man: “the prayer of the upright is his delight” (Prov. 15:8). God not only hears our prayers but is delighted when we pray to Him! But His answer to our prayers is according to His wisdom; His plans; His purposes. How does God answer prayers? In the way that is just and right!

Test Yourself

The Weather Test: Are you a sailboat Christian making progress in the Lord only if the winds are favorable? Or, are you a tug boat Christian plowing right ahead and pulling your load tho’ the gales are against you?

The Worry Test: “If you trust you do not worry; if you worry you do not trust”. Have you found that He keeps him in perfect peace whose mind is on God?

The Worldliness Test: Do you think as the world acts? Or does your life give evidence of having your affections set on things above?

The Work Test: How much of your energy is being given to the work of the Lord? Is it a reasonable portion of what you are expending in the day-by-day tasks of making a living?

The Influence Test: Are you by life and lip commending Christ, so that He is attractive to those who do not know Him or who have not accepted Him? Is your life a vote for him?

The Wallet Test: What portion of your income do you give unto the Lord and His work? Does what you give show how much you love the Lord?

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of August 5, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Bryant Siegel
Scripture Reading: Sammy Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Mark FitzSimmons
Fruit of the Vine: Will Cleveland
Offering: Dennis Bryson
Assist: Bryce Dolan, Curtis Scherffius, Brant Jacobs

Sunday Evening: Mark FitzSimmons, Will Cleveland

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Doug Jobs
P.M. Closing: Steve Randle

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Justin Guess

Open/Close Building: Don Lynn

Sound System: Don Lynn

Greeters:

Will Cleveland
Allen Clifton
Don Lynn

Prepare Communion: Dolan Family

To Our Visitors: We welcome you to our service. Perhaps this is the first time you have visited us. It is our desire to have you return often and give us a chance to become better acquainted with you. You will find visitor cards on the back of the pew in front of you. Please fill one out.

MEMBER INFORMATION UPDATE:

Patrick and Josha Gooch - 101 Mariner, Victoria, TX 77901

A friend of an elderly Christian, noticing how happy the old man always seemed to be remarked: "You act as if you owned the world." The old man smiled and quietly replied, "My Father does!"

- Selected-

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

JEFF AND KATHY LAWS, Jeff's brain surgery will be re-scheduled. Cards and calls are appreciated; BOB SMITH, who is at Citizens Hospital; YVONNE SMITH, who is home recovering from a hospital stay.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug. 5: The Forever Young group (formerly known as the 55+ group) will meet after evening worship @ the building

Aug. 11: Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 8am at the building

Aug. 12: Jr/Sr. High Youth Devotional hosted by Patrick and Josha Gooch. Boys bring drinks and girls bring dessert.

IN THE AREA

Aug 5-10: Evidence for Life gospel meeting @ Riverside

Sept: 15: Ladies' Day @ Southwest C of C

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Allena Cannady (6); Roy Arnot (9); Will Burleson (11)

Happy Anniversary: Jerry & Janice FitzSimmons (6)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady Della Rampley
Dee Gilpatrick Clark Withers
Ann Pantel

SHUT-INS

Lucille Hawkins Sandy Malone
Faye Henderson Bob Smith

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Victor Benitez Vikram Gottam
(brother of Virginia Escojido) (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Kim Neel-Farthing Antonio Benitez
(daughter of Joyce) (brother of Virginia Escojido)

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Elders:

Will Cleveland
Tom Pitchford

Deacons:

Adrian Cannady
Mark FitzSimmons
Doug Jobes
Bryant Siegel

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius**Secretary:** Nina Siegel**TIMES OF SERVICES**

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of July 29, 2018

Bible Class.....107
A.M. Worship.....140
P.M. Worship.....117
Wednesday Bible Study.....118

Offering \$4,163

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Faith (Belief)

Faith = Necessary.....Heb. 11:1,6
Believe or die in sin.....John 8:24,
Mark 16:16; John 3:16; James 2:17f

**SUPPORTED WORKS**

India - Mani Pagidipalli
New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

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