



Next week, Mark Mitchell, our Lead Pastor will return from his sabbatical, delivering the last sermon in our preaching series, **The King's Speech**. I am so honored and humbled that Mark and the elders entrusted me with the task of preaching the Word of God this summer. You have graciously responded to God's Word and me. Thank you. Preaching to an unresponsive group is discouraging. And you have been very responsive. I look forward to many, many years with you and the start of the South Campus in 2012.

Over the last eight weeks we've been reading, studying and meditating upon Jesus' final words to His disciples before He dies on the cross. Final words are permeated with thoughtfulness. Only a fool would waste their last words to cherished friends. John 14-16 has provided us many challenging and encouraging truths to consider.

Our verses today are Jesus' last words of instruction to His disciples. Next week, Mark will cover Jesus' prayer for them, from John 17, but in those verses Jesus is talking to God and allowing them to hear. Today's verses are the last instructions and they are on the topic of prayer.

Have you ever wondered why people end their prayers the way they do?

"In Jesus' name we pray, Amen."

"In Jesus' name, Amen."

"In your name, Amen."

"Amen."

In our verses today, Jesus repeats instructions He's already given His disciples: to pray "in my name." As we read through this passage, pay special attention to its occurrence. I'll read through the entire passage, then break it down bit by bit.

"In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because

you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father." His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God." Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:23–33).

A number of interesting words and phrases jump out as we read these verses. I'd like to point out the unifying theme of asking God "in the name of Jesus." Notice the emphasis Jesus is placing on "in my name."

- three times in our verses today
- six times in the entire Upper Room Discourse
- John 14-16 is the **only** place where Jesus instructs His disciples to pray "in my name."
- not in "The Lord's Prayer."

There are three usages earlier in the Upper Room Discourse: *"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son"* (John 14:13). *"If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it"* (John 14:14). *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you"* (John 15:16).

Obviously, Jesus is repeating and emphasizing this phrase. To understand why and see the implications for each of us, I'm centering the entire sermon this morning around the theme of "In the name of Jesus."

In the name of Jesus . . . we can approach God in prayer.

In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you (v. 23).

Look how Jesus tells the disciples you are going to ask God the Father directly. It's not that they can't ask Jesus; it's that now they can approach God the Father directly.

In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God (verses 26–27).

Again, Jesus is redirecting the disciples from dependency on Himself and shifting them to God the Father when He says “you will ask . . . I'm not asking on your behalf.”

To understand these words it is important to think like one of the disciples. Historically in the Old Testament God was primarily scary! God is primarily known as a holy God. Holy means pure and separate. The Temple contained the Holy of Holies—God was separate from His people. God instructed the Israelites to make animal sacrifices to Him, to take away their sin. Prayers in the Old Testament are dominated by themes of mercy and forgiveness. The Israelite history is filled with examples of God wiping out people who rebelled against Him. During the disciples' lives they had teachers of the Law and Pharisees to function as an in-between for them and God. Jesus is emphasizing direct access to God the Father because the disciples would have naturally resisted this change that Jesus is giving.

Jesus provides three reasons the disciples can approach God the Father so confidently.

1. We ask according to the relational leverage Jesus provides. **“I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father”** (v. 28). My wife and I recently went to Palm Springs and we got to stay at the Desert Marriott thanks to my father's Marriott Lifetime Platinum status! When I made a request at the front desk, it's as if my dad were making the request. They treated me according to his exalted status. When we make a request to God in the name of Jesus, it's as if Jesus were making the request himself.

2. We ask according to the righteous standing Jesus has.

3. We ask according to the love relationship between the Father and Son, which we are included in. **“For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God”** (v. 27).

In the name of Jesus . . . gives access to unlimited power.

In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you (John 16:23).

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13).

If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it (John 14:14).

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you (John 15:16).

With this, Jesus is adding to the disciples' direct access to God the Father that God will even give them what they ask for when they ask in the name of Jesus. Jesus is saying this to them to bolster their confidence, to assure them that God does listen to their prayers and He will answer them.

If we think about our own hindrances to prayer we can see how this kind of encouragement is necessary. We get discouraged and frustrated because it's not a transcendent experience like some. We still have unanswered prayers from the past. There's disappointment that God's “yes” did not transpire like we thought it would.

Jesus' words that God the Father will give us whatever we ask for in Jesus' name provides not only encouragement that requests will be answered but a framework for how to pray. The requests have to line up with Jesus' character. What do we know about the character of Jesus? The list is long: pure, love, just and humble to name just a few. When you are praying in His name, your requests should line up with His character. This is why God will **always** answer your prayer for more fruit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control. As you look at this list, which fruit jumps out at you as one you need more of?

God, I come to you on the basis and righteousness of Jesus Christ. And I ask you to increase your glory, fame and truth on the Peninsula. If you can use me to do this, then I am surrendered for you to use. Use me. And stir in the hearts of your people at CPC to surrender themselves to be used as well. I ask for a groundswell of people stepping forward to serve in whatever you are calling them. You know our High School ministry needs more leaders, please provide. You know our North campus needs your help to get into their building at PenCrest. And we really want to start a South campus, God. We want to spread your message of love and truth throughout the Peninsula. Please rally people around this vision. Please provide staff and a place to meet. Lord, you are the King. You are the Leader. We follow you. But these are our requests.

In the name of Jesus . . . joy will be full.

Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full (v. 24).

Our joy will be full because there is nothing more fulfilling and rewarding than asking God to do something and He does. Think of the joy to see the things we just prayed answered. I think of how I prayed for Alex to give his life to Jesus and when he did,

both of us cried. I think of how I prayed for a house for my family one year ago and God miraculously provided. I praise God for that. And I experienced joy.

However, when God answers “no” or “wait” to a request we are making, He doesn't leave us alone in the confusion and disappointment. God is more interested in our character than saying “yes” to all of our requests.

He grows our character when we experience a “no” or a “wait” to one of our requests. And He comforts us. He meets needs we might not have even known to ask for. And when He does this, we experience a joy that is full; a joy that supersedes the natural world; a joy that can be experienced in the middle of tragedy, suffering, confusion. This experience is where God's power is really highlighted, if you think about it, because there is no other logical explanation to joy in tragedy, in suffering and in confusion. Yet a Christian can experience it.

In the name of Jesus . . . we have peace.

His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! Now we know

that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.” Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (verses 29–33).

Jesus again predicts that the disciples will fail Him when the going gets tough. He knows they will fail and He tells them it's ok. He reminds them they are not alone (v. 32).

In their failure He offers them peace (v. 33).

This is peace from guilt and regret that will cripple our spiritual lives. He encouraged, **“I have overcome the world”** (v. 33) and if you believe in Him, you have access to His victorious power too.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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