

Ask, and Ye Shall Receive

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ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU, seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

God stands back of every promise He has made. He has given us the privilege of coming to Him, and we need not fear of wearying Him. In order to inspire us with assurance and confidence, Christ says: "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"

God desires us to believe these promises; He desires us to come before him with earnestness and assurance, to tell Him all about our necessities. Christ has given His life to make it possible for the human family to have another trial, to form such characters that the Lord can make them His sons and daughters, members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. We must not doubt the Word of promise. We have the Word of God, and, like the importunate widow, we are to plead for His blessing, for power to live as the children of God.

As workers together with God, Christ's disciples are to represent the character of their Redeemer. Christ says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. . . . And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world can not receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me; because I live, ye shall live also."

But there are conditions to the fulfillment of these promises. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He that hath My

commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming that His promise has been made for them, while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not those things by which they show their love and faith in Jesus Christ.

Many have forfeited, and are forfeiting, their conditions of acceptance with the Father. We need to closely examine the deed of trust wherewith we approach God. If we are disobedient, we bring to the Lord a note to be cashed, when we have not fulfilled our part of the contract. We complain that our check is not honored, when it is a forged check. We approach God with His promises, and ask Him to fulfill them, when by so doing He would dishonor His name.

The promise is, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." And John declares: "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."

The conditions are plainly stated, and those who read the Word need make no mistake. If we will prove ourselves true and faithful, the Lord will comply with the conditions He has made. Those who are doers of the Word give evidence that they are believers of the Word. They will have strong consolation because of the promises made, and in confidence will lay hold on eternal life.

There is a phase of this subject which is too often lost sight of, but it is of consequence to every soul who would seek the Lord in prayer. Have you been honest with your God? Search carefully; for the Lord says to His church and to every individual, "I know thy works." Everything is known to God. All is open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, and He says: "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return."

Spiritual blindness comes upon men when they choose their own way, and venture to transgress the commandments of God. God

has given men His ordinances to keep them in harmony with His ways and will, that God may co-operate with man, and man with God, in advancing His kingdom in the world. The Lord has given in trust to man everything which he calls his own, and He claims a certain portion of this for Himself. This is the return that man is to make to his God, to sustain the ministers whom the Lord has appointed to give the message of mercy to a fallen world. The watchmen upon the walls of Zion must be provided for in no haphazard manner. The Lord has intrusted the advancement and upbuilding of His kingdom to His sentinels, and they must do their appointed work. They must be faithful in their ministry, speaking the words that God has given them. The message is to be borne to the people: "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house; and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Through His servant God declares: "Behold, I will send My Messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. And who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

These preparations must be made by all who expect to receive anything of the Lord. Even those who worship idols make special preparations, and bring their gifts to the altar, before they ask their gods to do for them the things that they desire. And shall those who believe in God, the living God, approach Him with little reverence and in human superiority? Shall they be like the Pharisee, who praised and adored himself, and in his pride and self-sufficiency depreciated those whom he regarded as sinners? The Lord will not hear the prayers of such.

If the Lord were as fitful, as impulsive, as changeable, as human beings are, those who show such fruits of unrighteousness would be consumed in their sins; but the Lord bears long with the perversity of men. He is constantly reproofing them through His Word, constantly drawing them, that they may repent and be converted, that He may heal them. Few consider that it is a solemn thing to pray. How few watch unto prayer, and seek to speak and act in harmony with their prayers! The apostle Paul says: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good-pleasure."

Christ seeks to keep before our minds the course our heavenly Father pursues toward His obedient children, in delaying to answer their prayers. God would not have His people give up in discouragement if their prayers are not at once answered. He wants them to search their own hearts carefully, and with humility of mind. Have they used the talent of speech, given them to offer praise and thanksgiving to God, in hurting or discouraging any of God's children? Have they used the precious gift of God, the voice, to wound the soul of saint or sinner? If they have done this, let them put things right, let them remove the poisonous sting. These efforts to preserve Christian love and unity are essential to a preparedness to come before God in faith and confidence, to seek Him with all the heart.

The Word exhorts us, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Make confession to the ones you have injured. If others manifest wrong feelings toward you, or have injured you, carry them some token of regard. Tell them that you do not want anything of contention or division to exist between you; for this dishonors God. Then, tho you may not be able to soften the heart of the one who has wronged you, tho your kindness may be repulsed, you have done your duty, and God will bless you. He will give you His peace of mind and His grace. He will increase your trust in Him. Then you can bring your offering to God. Bring soul and voice and being to His altar, to be used to glorify Him, and He will accept the offering.
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