

What Sinners Should Plead With God

by Ralph Erskine

To receive Christ, one must plead God's promise, feebleness, power, necessity, mercy, and commission, and respond to God's offer with faith and grace.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:12, Psalm 80:1, Isaiah 53:11, Isaiah 61:1, Ezekiel 36:26, John 5:6, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Heart Transformation", "Salvation Through Christ"

Description

Ralph Erskine preaches on the importance of pleading with God for a new heart and spirit, emphasizing the free and gracious promise in Ezekiel 36:26-27. He encourages acknowledging our feebleness and inability to change ourselves, urging us to seek God's helping hand for transformation. Erskine highlights the power of God in overcoming our weaknesses and the necessity of Christ in our lives, emphasizing the ease with which God can work faith in us. He also stresses the mercy, freedom, and extension of God's compassion, inviting us to come to Him for life. Lastly, Erskine urges listeners to plead Christ's commission and the value of His blood, encouraging a decision to receive Christ and embrace His offer of salvation.

Transcript

1. Plead his promise, Ezek 36:26,27. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." It is a free, gracious promise: cry to him to make good that word to you, seeing he has said, "Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them." ver. 37. Tell him, that now you are come to inquire, and request him to do it.

2. Plead your own feebleness and inability to help yourselves; this was the impotent man's plea at the pool of Bethesda, John 5:6,7 "When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, 'Do you want to get well?' 'Sir,' the invalid replied, 'I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.'" So say you, Lord, I have lain many years with this dead plagued heart, beside the open fountain of your blood; I am unable to move to it of myself; I have none to put me in: ordinances cannot do it; ministers cannot do it; you must put to your helping hand, or else the work will remain unperformed.

3. Plead his power, in a sense of your own weakness. Do you feel the power and multitude of your corruptions within you? Say with Jehoshaphat, "Lord I have no might against this great company; neither know I what to do: but mine eyes are upon you." With you all things are possible. Though I may despair of

help in myself and others; yet, you have forbid me to despair of help in you. You said, Let there be light, and there was light; therefore say, let there be faith, and it will immediately take place; for faith is your work and your gift: it is "the work of God that we believe: by grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God."

4. Plead your necessity, your extreme need of Christ and of faith in him. O man, there is not a starving man that needs food so much as you need Christ: there is not a wounded man that needs a physician; a shipwrecked man that needs a plank; a dying man, with the death rattle in his throat, that needs breath so much, as you need Christ. O then, cry, "Give me Christ, or else I die." I may live without friends, without wealth, and honour, and pleasure; but I cannot live without Christ, and without faith. Plead his power; how easy it is for him to help, saying, as Psalm 80:1 "you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth!" It will cost you no more pain to work faith in me, than it does the sun to shine forth. Yea, he can more easily put forth his power and grace, than the sun can dart out its beams. It is no trouble nor loss to the sun to shine forth, so neither will it be to him, to show his power and mercy: a look, or a touch, will do it; since he can so easily do it. You may cry with hope; he will never miss an alms bestowed on a beggar, out of the ocean of his bounty. Nay, as the sun, the more it shines displays its glory the more; so will he gain glory by putting forth his power to help you.

5. Plead his mercy, and the freedom and extension of it. Plead the freedom of his mercy, that needs no motive, and expects no worth: it runs freely, so that the mountains cannot stop the current of it, no more than the rocks can stop the ebbing and flowing of the sea. Plead the extension of his mercy to others: he had compassion on men's bodies, that came to him for healing, and will he not have compassion upon souls, that come to him for life? Is not mercy the work that he delights in? The perfection of his nature, he takes pleasure to display.

6. Plead Christ's commission, Isa. 61:1, that he came "to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners." Cry, Lord, here is a poor prisoner, a locked and bound up heart; here is employment for you. O loose and knock off my fetters, and bring my soul out of prison. O here is a naked sinner for you to cover, a wounded soul for you to cure, a lost sheep for you to seek and save; and was not this your errand? You came to seek and save that which was lost. And will you not find a lost sinner, that desires to seek you through your grace? Plead his commission under the broad seal of heaven; for, "Him has God the Father sealed." And plead the value of his blood, and merit of his righteousness: and upon that ground whereby all grace is purchased: plead for faith and grace to receive Jesus Christ the Lord.

Thus I have laid before you some directions, in order to the receiving of Christ. O cry for grace to follow them, and put them in practice, so you may indeed close the bargain with him. O shall all these directions be lost, and Christ be still slighted and rejected! O friends, you cannot please God better, than by coming to Christ and embracing the offer of him; and you cannot please the devil better than by refusing the offer of Christ; and putting him off with delays, till you perish in your unbelief.

And now, after all that has been said, what are you resolved upon? Will you receive Christ or not? Our glorious Lord and Master has sent us to pose you man, woman, and demand whether you will receive him or not? O! what answer shall we return with? Must we go and say, that all this people, upon no terms, will receive him; none of them are for precious Christ? Oh! God forbid! shall he not see the travail of his soul, who travailed through all the armies of God's wrath for you, and gave his soul an offering for your sin? O give your soul to him, saying, Lord, in spite of the devil and of unbelief, through grace I will open my heart

and arms to receive Christ! The Lord himself help you to receive him, and walk in him.

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