

# Prayer in the Name

by Raymond Golsworthy

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*Prayer in the Name is a powerful and effective way to pray, rooted in our union with Christ and our relationships with other believers.*

**Scripture:** John 14:13, John 15:7, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:18, Philippians 4:13, Colossians 3:17, Jude 1:20

**Topics:** "Prayer Life", "Christ Centered"

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## Description

Raymond Golsworthy preaches on the importance of praying in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, emphasizing that all requests made in His Name will be granted. He explains that prayer in the Name is a Christ-united prayer, highlighting the organic oneness believers have with Christ and the privilege to pray to the Father as if the Son Himself were praying. Golsworthy delves into the significance of Christ-enthroning prayer, where believers acknowledge Christ's headship in their lives, leading to sifted prayers and a new quality of faith. He also discusses the concept of executive prayer, where believers, as part of the ruling Christ, exercise authority in prayer over situations and oppositions. Golsworthy further explores body-embracing prayer, emphasizing the importance of unity and love among believers in the body of Christ. He touches on crucified prayer, indicating that praying in the Name involves abandoning self-reliance and fully trusting in Christ's accomplishments. Lastly, he discusses Spirit-filled prayer, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in enabling believers to pray in the Name, and consistent prayer, where every aspect of life is lived in recognition of being united with Christ.

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## Transcript

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do." John 14:13

"If ye shall ask any thing in My Name, I will do it." John 14:14

"... That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He may give it you." John 15:16

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." John 16:23

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name; ask and ye shall receive." John 16:24

"At that day ye shall ask in my Name." John 16:26

One of the most important secrets which the Christian needs to learn is that of prayer in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is immediately apparent from a simple reading of the above promises, all of them directly from the lips of Christ Himself. Our Lord emphatically declares that whatever is asked in His Name shall be granted to us. How necessary, then, to understand the meaning of prayer in the Name and to be occupied in that ministry! That is the one requirement: it must be prayer in the Name!

The variety of answers one is given when one asks what people understand by prayer in the Name, is quite surprising. Some think of it in terms of a certain verbal formula which we are required to append at the end of every prayer that we present. Others take somewhat higher ground and say that it is prayer offered with a view to the glorifying of Christ. Others, again, feel that it is prayer that draws on the resources of Christ to which we have access as His friends. These answers may get nearer and nearer to the truth, but it is our conviction that they miss the point itself and leave us unenlightened as to the particular secret which our Lord had in mind.

What, then, is prayer in the Name of Christ? We shall seek to answer this question under seven simple headings, the first of which will be the governing one, including, in a sense, all that follow. One request we make before we proceed. In considering the various points brought forward, the reader may be inclined to think it is all a very complicated matter and may even be tempted to give it up as hopeless! This, however, would not be justified. Let the reader continue patiently right till the end, for it is there we shall gather up what has been said and show how simple it all is as far as final and practical application is concerned. That may sound too good to be true, but it is a fact. A quiet pressing on in faith will bring us to the secret; and who can measure the blessing that will follow? That is what we have in mind. We are not at all interested in the merely academical, but seek only the glory of the Lord and the real blessing of His people.

#### 1. Prayer in the name is Christ-joined prayer.

This summarises the whole secret! The wonderful fact is that the post-Pentecost believer is organically one with His risen and ascended Lord. This is the grace of God, but it is what the Bible tells us and we can only bow and worship. At the very moment of our trusting Christ for our salvation, the Lord Himself graciously responds and pours His own risen life deep into us, so that we become joined to Him, one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). The Living New Testament puts it like this: "If you give yourself to the Lord, you and Christ are joined together as one person." This is the miracle of new birth and, as all will realise, it is a miracle that introduces us to an altogether new principle of living. We are now positively joined, in life, to our risen and ascended Lord. The Saviour and the saved are now one organism.

The Bible uses various figures in setting this wonderful truth before us. We are told, for instance, that Christ is the Vine and we are the branches (John 15:5), or, again, that He is the Head and we are the body (Col. 1:18). Paul tells us that, as Christians, we are the fullness (lit. completing) of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23). All we can say is that Christ has somehow shared Himself with us, He has extended Himself into us!

Now it is because of this actual union with Christ that we are justified in using His Name in our prayers. We have been made participating members in the one great, corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). Hence our glorious right to pray to the Father in the Name of His Son. To the Father it is just as if the Son Himself were praying, which, indeed, He is! He is praying to the Father through His members, and how can the Father possibly turn away from that? Whatsoever we ask, as from that wonderful place of living union with

the Lord, shall be granted to us!

This unmistakable meaning was further confirmed and underlined by the Lord through a parallel promise which He deliberately inserted among the promises already quoted. In the same discourse He says: "If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). John 15 is the chapter of the Vine and the branches and we do not hesitate to say that once that mystery is truly revealed, it opens up an entirely new ministry to us - not least a new ministry of prayer, or, should we say it provides an altogether new approach to that ministry. We now pray to God as being positively joined to His Son, we pray in the Son's glorious Name!

Hudson Taylor's comment on this truth brings the matter into clearest light. He himself made the great discovery after reaching China and, writing to his sister, he says: "O my dear sister, it is a wonderful thing to be really one with a risen and exalted Saviour, to be a member of Christ. Think what it involves! Can Christ be rich and I poor? Can your right hand be rich and your left poor? Can your head be well fed while your body starves? Again, think of its bearing on prayer. Can a bank clerk say to a customer: "It was your hand that wrote that cheque, not you?" Or could he say: "I cannot pay this sum to your hand, but only to yourself?" Nor can your prayers, or mine, be discredited if offered in the Name of Jesus (i.e. not in your own name, or for the sake of Jesus merely, but on the ground that we are His', His members), so long as we keep within the extent of Christ's credit, a tolerably wide limit!"

Basically, and governing all else, prayer in the Name is Christ-united prayer; it is prayed on the ground of our present organic oneness with the Lord Himself. O that our eyes might be opened to see this wonderful fact and this glorious possibility.

Our second point emerges very naturally from the first and may be stated as follows:

## 2. Prayer in the name is Christ-enthroning prayer.

When we pray as the members of Christ's body, we obviously pray as being under Christ's headship. As all will realise, abiding in Christ is necessarily abiding under Him, for He is the Head of the body (Col. 1:18; 2:19; etc.). It follows, then, that we cannot say we are abiding in Him for our prayers if there is any wilful avoidance of His government on any point that touches our lives.

This general matter of the government of Christ is a tremendous one, having strong bearing on every aspect of the believer's life. We do not intend, just now, to explore that subject in any of its wider detail, but by way of example, it might be appropriate to suggest a few respects in which the government of the Lord will show itself, for instance, in the actual nature and character of our prayers.

In the first place, Christ's headship will invariably sift our prayers. A person who is really under the government of the Lord will find he only brings those requests which flow from, and are in keeping with, that government. This immediately rules out foolish and selfish and carnal petitions and we shall find from experience, that abiding in Christ progressively eliminates, or dries up, that kind of petition. In fact, it subdues that whole area of motivation. Indeed, we may say that requests of that kind become organically impossible wherever there is a deep and real acceptance of Christ's headship.

Again, the headship of Christ will always have the effect of creating within us what we may call a new quality, or measure, of faith and expectation. As we deliberately bring ourselves under this great Lord of all, we become freshly aware of His tremendous majesty and we begin to sense, in an inward way, His

absolute mastery over every situation that exists around us. We realise afresh that we are in union with an almighty King, in touch with a universal throne and a new strength of faith is accordingly generated in our awed and worshipping hearts and spirits. Our very abiding in such a Christ has brought to us a new measure of expectation from Him. We know that we can trust this Christ for anything!

In the very practical realm, this Headship of the Lord will show itself in the actual manner of our asking. Our posture while we pray, the tone of our voice and the composure we manifest, will all bespeak His government. Everything will be decent and in order (1 Cor. 14:40), the beautiful order of His body. And let us stress that these are not features or methods which we have to cultivate or affix, they are the simple and spontaneous expressions of a life willingly submitted to Christ's Headship.

Finally, Christ's government will also be seen in the spirit and manner in which we receive God's answers to our prayers. As we have been ruled in our asking, so shall we be ruled in our receiving. There will be no hurrying to consume on our own lusts that which God has given us (James 4:3). On the contrary, while we are in the process of receiving, we shall be saying to ourselves: "All things are ours, but we are Christ's, and Christ is God's," (see 1 Cor. 3:22, 23). We shall know that we have been enriched, not just for ourselves, but for Him who is our Head. All that is given, therefore, is held unto Him and not even conceived of as apart from Him.

In these ways, then - and doubtless many others - the headship of Christ will show itself in the manner and character of our praying. As we previously said, the wider aspects and evidences of the Lord's government we do not here discuss, but the basic principle of His rule is something which has to be faced and settled if there is to be real praying in the Name. Christ must be Lord indeed!

Our third point follows on naturally from the above.

### 3. Prayer in the name is executive prayer.

We have been saying that prayer in the Name is prayed by ruled people; they are ruled by Christ. It would be equally true to say that it is prayed by ruling people, for the ones who pray are themselves part of the great ruling Christ! They are the participating members of the Man upon the throne; they are, as Paul said, the fullness of the King (Eph. 1:23). This is what God's grace has done.

The truth of the present dominion of the Lord Jesus is a basic one. In fact, the very word Christ is itself a title of office (like king, or president are) and not a distinguishing name at all. The word only signifies 'One who has been anointed to reign' and corresponds exactly to the Old Testament word Messiah. The simple fact is that God has openly anointed His Son Jesus and has separated Him for universal dominion. Already the true Christ is there upon the holy hill of Zion and crowned as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The point we are stressing now, however, is that we ourselves have already been united to that great Christ, as surrendered believers we have been added to the Lord (Acts 5:14; 11:24) we have been made part of Him. His' is the Name we bear, we are Christians, sharing His anointing) and His, accordingly, is the work and office that we share. This is a tremendous truth and yet a humbling one. Rightly we rejoice that the true Christ reigns, but we should rejoice still more that He reigns in union with us! Being our living Head, He exercises His authority through us, we are His members. In Christ God has made us kings and priests (Rev. 1:6) and, as Paul puts it, we reign in life by one, Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:17; see also 1 Cor. 4:8; etc.). And let us remember that this does not only relate to the future. While it is blessedly true that a glorious calling of dominion awaits us in the ages that are to come, it is also a fact that, right now, we reign

with Christ in an inward and spiritual way. Even today, what we bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and what we loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18, 20) and all is by virtue of our present union with our reigning Lord.

We have mentioned all this because it brings into view this further characteristic of prayer in the Name. We believe it is right to say that, in this kind of prayer, there will always be found the discernable element of Christ's authority, an authority which He shares with His members and expresses through them. As Christians we are not only suppliants, we are sovereigns, and we frequently find the Lord's clear word of authority going forth through our petitions. Certainly those who pray in the Name will be stirred again and again to declare Christ's absolute rule over individuals and situations they are acquainted with and even over unseen forces and intelligences that would assert themselves in opposition to the progress and power of Christ's kingdom. At such times it is the King who prays through us, indeed reigns through us. While we are under His headship we may expect that a positively regal note, as well as a submissive one, will be detected in our prayers we are praying in His Name!

Perhaps we need to stress again that what we are now speaking of is not to be regarded as some advanced technique which we are to try to cultivate or assume. It is just an expression of life, a natural going forth of the regal life of Christ now resident and operative within us. Indeed, we would say that the main matter for us to be concerned about at such times is that of our own personal submission to the will of the Lord, for it is this, and this alone, that lifts us to the realm where we may subjugate His enemies. In other words, we must be sure that our own spirits, souls and bodies; our thoughts, affections and wills; our motives and ambitions, are all settled under Christ's lordship, for then only can our prayers be executive and mediate the derived authority of our Lord. As the centurion said, it is they who are under authority who wield authority (Matt. 8:9). Let everyone take note of this lest there be a repetition of the tragic history of the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:16).

Our fourth point takes us now to the important matter of our relationships with other members of Christ's body.

#### 4. Prayer in the name is body-embracing prayer.

We have been saying that prayer in the Name is rooted in this wonderful fact of our incorporation into the body of Christ. Now it naturally follows that when we take our place in Christ for this ministry we find ourselves in company, also, with all those other believers who are equally in Christ and equally the members of His body. Indeed, we find ourselves in union with them, a union just as real as our union with Christ Himself! If it is true that we only partake of the Name as being in union with the Lord, it is equally true that we only partake of the Name as being in corresponding union with His people. In other words, our prayer-power is very much bound up with our relationships with our brethren. This, again, is a solemn and searching matter.

Perhaps, at this stage, not one of us would question that if we cut ourselves off from Christ, we render ourselves unable to pray in the Name. It is equally true, however, that if we cut ourselves off from any member of Christ's body, or any number of members, we are similarly disqualified from this tremendous ministry. By isolating ourselves from our brethren (we refer to inner attitudes of heart and spirit) we are, in actual fact, leaving the ground of the one, corporate Christ. And this, as we have seen, is the whole ground of prayer in the Name.

The simple fact we have to acknowledge is that when we take our place with Christ, we take our place as well with all the members of His body. If we stipulate that only certain ones shall constitute our spiritual society, then, in order to have what we require, we shall have to devise for ourselves some sphere other than the body, for it is unavoidable that all the redeemed, not just some of them, are in that body. Even to conceive of some lesser sphere, shall we say something more congenial to ourselves, is virtually to set ourselves outside the body, and to forfeit the possibility of praying in the Name. To get through in this matter, we just have to take the place of being one undivided and indivisible life with every blood-bought Christian everywhere, and this not only in theory, but also in genuine heart reality. This is a very practical and demanding matter.

Many, we are sure, would joyfully testify that it is a specially wonderful thing when God does bring us into the blessedness of true body-relatedness and fellowship with all our Christian brethren. Our individual circumstances may vary and for most of us there may not be opportunity to implement the vision as fully and completely as we would wish, but we can praise God if, at least, the new mind to embrace all, without any limitation, is really established in us and we genuinely see ourselves as involved with all saints in the one body of Christ.

To be still more practical in what we are now presenting, we would suggest the following as being some of the ways in which a true body-consciousness and relationship will manifest itself in our experience.

In the first place, there will be a genuine attitude of love towards all those who, having believed the gospel, have been brought, equally with ourselves, into the one great family of God. This love will be sincere and wholly indiscriminating and it will consistently express itself in practical ways. There is certainly much in the New Testament that urges this kind of love upon us, (see John 13:35; Acts 2:44; 1 John 3:14; etc.).

Again, because we are one body, there will be a right degree and spirit of dependence on our brethren. We shall regard them as fellow members and whatever may be their individual gift and measure, we shall gladly confess that we need them all, as essential to the effective functioning of the whole. This principle is beautifully presented in 1 Cor. 12:14-20 and, once it is really seen, the isolated and self-sufficient attitude quickly gives way to what we may call the corporate mind. We begin to find real joy in looking to each other in humble interdependence and in moving together in the Lord and for the Lord, (see 1 Cor. 12:21; etc.).

Perhaps it needs to be said that this body-consciousness leads one to a willing and humble acceptance of the clear spiritual order which the Lord Himself sets within the body. We refer, here, to spiritual leaders and elders whom we know to have been set over us by the Lord and as we are subject to our Head, so shall we be subject to these also for His sake. All will be in a context of mutual appreciation and respect and we shall know that the Lord has graciously put them in that position for our good. Subject to the Lord, we shall be subject to these also in the Lord, (see 1 Cor. 16:16; Col.3:18; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5; etc.). This is all part of being in the body and being able to share in the glories and powers of the Name.

Finally we would say that, once this revelation of mutual involvement in the body takes hold of us, we shall find ourselves lifted into a realm where our interests and concerns are decidedly non-sectarian and where our heart objectives are definitely for the one body of Christ without bias or limitation. Our relationships and fellowship will certainly be super-national. We shall rejoice that, whatever may have been our origins naturally, we are now citizens together of a new and heavenly country (Phil. 3:20). Old things and old reckonings have passed away, all has become new (2 Cor. 5:17). It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous

in our eyes.

As we said before, a practical implementing of the above principle is always costly, but once the heart attitude is right, the Lord will show us whatever steps may need to be taken by us at any time. But our sufficient point, for the moment, is that this genuine acceptance of all who are in the body and this true fellowship with them in spirit, are essential to true life in Christ and thus to this special ministry and privilege of prayer in the Name.

This brings us very suitably to our fifth point:

##### 5. Prayer in the name is crucified prayer.

By crucified prayer we mean prayer that is prayed by crucified people, in the sense in which the term is used in Galatians 2:20, for instance.

Let us explain. Our governing thought in all that we have said thus far is that prayer in the Name is prayer in union with Christ, it is prayer in Christ. Our present point goes a little further and we believe it will become plain if we now make a general statement regarding this union with Christ. Here is our statement: "Whenever we take our place in Christ, be it for prayer or for any other purpose, we are, in point of fact, departing from the whole ground of Adam."

Let us ponder this carefully, for here is something which has tremendous bearing, not only on our prayer life, but also on every aspect of the new life and ministry to which we are called.

It must be clear to all that when we take our place in Christ, as His incorporate members, we correspondingly forsake our place in Adam. We realise that God has graciously set us in a new world, indeed, He has placed us in a new Man and we see ourselves now as mercifully delivered from the old. Eagerly we avail ourselves of this deliverance and gratefully we concur with this welcome transfer. Life for us, now, is abiding in Christ and we find we have no confidence at all in Adam. And it is not that we are leaving something good in favour of something better, as if Adam were good, but Christ better. The Holy Spirit sheds His clear light on this and in our hearts we know that we are abandoning an area completely disapproved by God and entering the only existing area of divine approval, God's dear Son.

We do need to see that whenever we claim union with Christ we are really concurring with God in a twofold way. In the first place we are endorsing His approval of His Son: "This is My beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; etc). At the same time we are concurring with His disapproval, complete and absolute, of the first man, Adam. It is all very humiliating to us as we are in ourselves, but it is an attitude based on God's truth and in the end it will bring us into an enjoyment of God's glorious purpose for us in His Son. We just have to admit that, in ourselves, we are part of a whole rebel humanity, captured by God's enemy, concurring with that enemy and totally unacceptable in God's eyes. It is to our intense relief that we may embrace such a glorious alternative life in the new Man, Christ. Our language, now, in everything, is: "Not I, but Christ."

The point we are now seeking to make is that precisely the same principle obtains when we take our place in Christ for prayer. Hiding in the new Man and accepting our privileged share in His Name, we necessarily abandon our earlier standing in Adam. In other words, accepting God's provision of the new, we endorse God's judgment of the old. This is implicit in our praying in the Name.

Regarding that judgment of the old, it is the cross that reveals the nature and extent of that judgment and which, in fact, carries that judgment out. The Scriptures tell us that Christ died on the cross as the representative of the old and fallen humanity (2 Cor. 5:14), so this means that a complete judgment of death, and nothing less than death, has already fallen on that whole corrupt creation, whether or not in our eyes it had previously been good or bad. In that sense, the cross clearly shows us the nature and extent of the divine judgment and likewise indicates to us what our own attitude has to be if we would really live in the new Man, Christ.

This is precisely what Paul means when he says: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" (Gal. 5:24). Our very acceptance of a place in the new Man constitutes our positive agreement with the crucifixion of the old. It is our personal endorsement of the divine judgment already carried out against our whole natural being at the Cross.

Regarding prayer in the Name, then, it would be equally right to say: "They who pray in the Name have crucified the flesh." Prayer in the Name is prayer in Christ and in taking up that privileged position, we are personally accepting the crucifixion of all that we are and all that we have in Adam. Thoughts of personal standing and personal resource are all abandoned; in fact that whole realm is avoided as something dead, offensive and wholly undesirable. In Christ alone we stand; His Name we share and in that new place of privilege and honour, we enter into God's glorious presence and claim the promises. Such is prayer in the Name, crucified prayer.

Our next point can be briefly dealt with, but again it is most important.

#### 6. Prayer in the Name is Spirit-filled prayer.

In His valedictory message to His disciples (John 14, 15 and 16), the Lord emphasised that an entirely new era was about to begin. It was to be the era of the Holy Spirit, and, among all else, it was to have a deep effect on their praying. The Lord said: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name" (John 16:24) and He followed with the positive statement: "At that day ye shall ask in My Name" (John 16:26). He was referring, quite clearly, to the day of the coming of the Holy Spirit and to the whole new period that was to follow that glorious event. It was this coming of the Holy Spirit evidently, that would initiate the new era and make possible the new practice of prayer in the Name. At that day ye shall ask in My Name!

The inner truth behind all this was that the Holy Spirit was destined to become the actual bond of union between Christ in heaven and His trusting people on the earth. While it was true that Christ was sending the Holy Spirit (John 16:7), He could equally say, "I will not leave you comfortless: I (Myself) will come to you" (John 14:18). Elsewhere we read that the Holy Spirit is actually called the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9) and also the Spirit of life in Christ (Rom. 8:2). We know that Christ and the Spirit are really inseparable. We can only rejoice, then, that it was by this coming of the Holy Spirit that Christ communicated Himself to us and constituted thereby the marvellous reality of the vine and the branches. The Holy Spirit Himself is the bond of union.

It follows that it is this actual presence of the Holy Spirit in us that makes possible the new kind of praying, praying in the Name. Prior to Pentecost, the disciples could not use the Name in prayer, because the union itself had not yet been established. Indeed, the church, which is His body, had not yet had its birth, as far as man's experience was concerned. It was the coming of the Holy Spirit that would make all this an accomplished reality and thereby qualify believers to pray in the Name.

In our case, thank God, we already live in the age of the outpoured Holy Spirit. The Spirit has come and we may now enjoy all the unspeakable benefits of the new era that has dawned. Certainly, as joined to Christ in this living way, we may pray in the Name. The point we are now seeking to make, however, is that all these indescribable benefits come to us purely and simply in terms of the Holy Spirit. It is only as we are really filled with Him, the blessed Spirit, that we can know the blessedness of the new union and thus share the Name in a living way.

Let us be careful not to make mistakes in this great matter. The Name is not imparted to us simply through our acceptance of some fascinating idea, or by our intellectual assent to some high biblical principle. The Name is only ours through the throbbing of a new indwelling life actually communicated into our mortal bodies in the Person and presence of the Holy Spirit. In brief, it is they who are filled with the Spirit who may pray in the Name. And we have to experience a continual and fresh 'supply' (Phil. 1:19).

We see, then, that praying in the Name is very much related to praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20) and we would certainly do well to take careful note of the references which show the important place of the Holy Spirit in the prayers of God's people, (see Rom. 8:26; Eph. 6:18; etc.). As we have said, it is the indwelling Spirit Who is the bond of union with our Lord and it is this union which gives us the right to pray in the Name.

To conclude this section we feel we can pass on a special word of encouragement to those who sincerely want to be filled with the Spirit and to pray in the Name. It has always rejoiced our hearts that the command to be filled with the Spirit comes in so simply and so naturally in the letter to the Ephesians (Chap. 5:18). According to the wording and context of the commandment, there were no difficult conditions to be met and no heavy strains to be experienced before we could have the blessing, it was simply a matter of drinking, drinking into an available supply. It reminds us perfectly of a very similar word spoken by the Lord Himself. You will remember that He said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke 11:13). Being filled with the Spirit is really a very simple matter, provided, of course, that there is a genuine sincerity and openness on our part. So, let us ask and receive, let us drink and be filled, filled with the Holy Spirit. And then let us go on to pray in the Name and give thanks in the Name. (We should notice again, that giving thanks in the Name follows on from being filled with Spirit, according to Eph. 5:18-20. It is the filling, evidently, that makes way for a using of the Name.)

Our final point can be presented very briefly, but again it touches something which is most important.

#### 7. Prayer in the Name is consistent prayer.

When Paul wrote to the Colossians he said: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). This is a demanding word, but at the same time, it is an encouraging one, for even the smaller details of our daily life and programme may evidently be approached with the same happy realisation that we are already joined to our risen and ascended Lord! Certainly Paul would have us know that the Name is not only given for what we might call the special or spiritual areas of our lives, or for the higher ministries required of us, but also for every area of our life, for every activity of our daily walk. In other words, everything we do may be done and must be done with the recognition that we are, right now, incorporated into Christ. Whatever our occupation at any given moment, we are to undertake it with the realisation that we are organically one with our exalted Lord, members of His body and sharers of His Name. We are to act and think and speak, and may do so, as those who are the extensions of God's Son,

abiding in Him and drawing all we need from Him. This is the thought we have in mind when we say that prayer in the Name is consistent prayer. It is to be thought of as but a single part of a whole life lived in the blessedness of this revelation and in the power of this glorious union.

We do well to notice that when Paul urged the Colossian believers to do all in Name of the Lord Jesus, he was intensely practical about it and went on immediately to discuss the various relationships and responsibilities of the normal Christian home. He expressly mentions wives, husbands and children and also servants and master. The whole scene is an intensely familiar one. We rightly conclude that the Name is intended to penetrate those areas also and everything, even there, is to be done in the Name, realising our oneness with our exalted Lord.

This, of course, is only reasonable. It would be foolish for us to think that we can take our place in Christ for prayer, if we do not do the same for every exercise and area of our daily living. The man who is one with Christ for the ministry of intercession is one with Christ too as he drives his car, or attends to various duties in his office. For him there is no moving in and out of Christ according to the sanctity of the occupation. His whole life is one of abiding, with its attendant heritage of sharing the Name. Thank God, Christ is prepared to be our dwelling place at all times, our All in all, in everything! A lesser concept than that surely precludes us from any consistent praying in the Name.

Praying in the Name, then, is bound up with living in the Name. In everything we count on our oneness with our living Lord; in everything we accept His headship; and in everything we cleave to all our brethren. In everything we embrace the cross and in everything we are filled with the Spirit. We do all in the Name!

With that simple and practical emphasis we conclude the main body of our study. Gathering all into one sentence, we would say that prayer in the Name is simply prayer in union with the risen Christ, yet always giving due attention to the various matters that are implicit in that union. O that the Lord might bring us ever more deeply into this secret!

For our final paragraphs we now refer back to a special statement we made in the introduction of our study. We were warning then about the possibility of unwarranted discouragements and we said that the various principles we were about to mention would come back in the end, to a very simple consideration easily within the reach of all. We were referring, you may have guessed, to the matter of faith, to the necessity of a wholehearted trust in Christ Himself. Let us explain exactly what we had in mind.

As we have read through these pages, we could easily have gathered the impression that various attainments of our own were necessary before we could pray in the Name. That, however, is not so. On the contrary, the real secret lies in the total abandonment of any thought of our own attainment and then a simple and wholehearted trust in the attainments and abilities of someone else, namely the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. That is how we got our salvation in the first place and the Bible makes it very plain that the same transfer of confidence is the secret, also, of every onward step in the Christian life. "The just shall live by faith", says Paul, and he means that we are to keep on living and to keep on growing, on the same basic principle of believing, or, in other words, by a continual trusting in Someone else. The thought is that we are to quietly persist in the same heart attitude of looking away to Christ, depending wholly on Him and glorying continually in Him. In short, we make Him our supreme occupation; His merits become our song, His accomplishments our resting-place and His attainments our single and satisfying ground of hope. In everything we simply place our trust in Christ; we live by Him even as He lived by the Father (John 6:57).

Now all this applies very clearly to the matter of praying in the Name, or, shall we say, to the matter of our fittedness for praying in the Name. While the preceding pages of our study may have reminded us again and again of our own personal inabilities, that is only to lead us to a fresh claiming of His abilities, all fully credited to us already in the wonderful grace of God. When all has been said and done, we can still only plead that we are trusting Christ and taking Him to be our whole fittedness for everything, even our praying in His Name! And the marvel is that, as we do just this, we begin to discover and enjoy an immediate acceptance with God and, in fact, we find that the qualifications we need begin to be found in us as well<sup>3</sup>and all through Him.

That may sound very simple, but it is a revealed simplicity and it is the ordained way for every kind of progress in the Christian life. It continually stands that, apart from the Lord, we can do nothing and it is this necessitated believing in Him that leads to the quiet act of believing and then, in due time, to the established habit of believing, just resting in Him continually for all we need. Strange though it may sound, the whole Christian life is really a matter of believing in, or looking to, Someone other than ourselves. God tells us He has placed us in His Son (1 Cor. 1:30) and has willingly credited us with all His merits. Gratefully we take our position there, accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6), the members of His body and in the happy place of unspeakable privilege we live. And from that place we pray in the Name.

May we close with a simple illustration? A small child may be completely unfitted or unqualified in itself to cross a busy street in the midst of rushing traffic. But if a strong father is standing by, the child may place its tiny hand inside the encompassing hand of the more-than-willing father. Thus the abilities of the father are, as it were, transmitted to the trusting child and the street is crossed without the slightest fear. And it is just the same with the matter of praying in the Name, or living in the Name. By faith we place our whole being within the whole being of our risen and ascended Saviour, and all that He is, in absolute objective fittedness somehow seeps into us. Resting and relaxing in that place, we immediately share the Name and may proceed forthwith to pray before the Father as the honoured and accepted members of His Son.

The special point is that praying in the Name is not something for which we, in ourselves, can ever be, or become, qualified. It is something for which we take all needed qualifications from Christ Himself.

The secret is beautifully gathered up in those illuminated words of Frances Ridley Havergal:

Jesus, Thy Life is mine,

Dwell evermore in me;

And let me see

That nothing can untwine

Thy Life from mine.

Thy Life in me be shown,

Lord, I would henceforth seek

To think and speak

Thy thoughts, Thy words alone,

No more my own.

O my God teach us to live in the Name and pray in the Name.

"I can ... through Christ." Phil. 4:13

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