

August 24, 2008 – SERMON SUMMARY

Praying In Jesus' Name

When people hear the word prayer they think of many different things. People pray in different styles. Some stand, others kneel, others sit, and others bow. It is not the style that really matters just so the person "bows" or humbles their heart before God. Many people end their prayer with the words, "In Jesus' name I pray, Amen." Today we will look at what that really means.

In the beginning God created mankind. Mankind sinned and all of us who have followed have also sinned. Romans 6:23 tells us that the penalty for our sin is death, not just a physical death, but a spiritual death as well.

God began to reach out to mankind to remedy this separation. God instructed His people in the Old Testament to build a house of worship. In the center of this Temple was a small area known as the Holy of Holies. This Holy place was behind a curtain so no one could enter or see in. This is where God dwelled. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter this place and sprinkle the blood from the sacrifice so that the sins of the people could be forgiven. Every year this had to be repeated, and only by the priest. The curtain symbolized the sin and the separation from God. Because of this only the High Priest could go into the presence of God, and only once a year.

In Mark 15:38 Jesus dies on the cross and the scripture tells us that in that moment the curtain was miraculously ripped in two from top to bottom. Jesus' death had made a way for all of us now to enter into the presence of God. His death also became the sacrifice that would cover our sins for all time. There would never need to be another sacrifice.

It was a visual display of the fact that the way had now been cleared for all of us to come into an intimate relationship with the King of the Universe. We could now enter the throne room of God to present our requests and receive mercy and grace in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16) But we are not able to come before God in our name, for our righteousness is like filthy rags. We come before God in the name of Christ who made the way so that we may be forgiven and counted as righteous. It would be as if we came before God to present our request and Christ steps forward and says, "Father please lend them your ear and your aid, because they are with me."

But it is not only that Jesus made it possible for us to pray, His name is also the power in our prayers. In Philippians 2 it tells us that Jesus humbled Himself to the point of becoming a human and dying on the cross for our sins. Because of this, "God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." There is nothing in all creation, physical or spiritual that is more powerful than the name of Jesus.

Praying in Jesus' name makes our prayers, possible and powerful, but now we must focus on our part of praying in Jesus' name. In the Hebrew culture of the Old Testament a name was not just what you were called, it was your identity, your character, and who you were as a person. This idea continues in the New Testament when we are called to pray in Jesus' name. It could be restated by saying to pray in Jesus' character. Are our prayer requests the type of prayers that Jesus would pray? If not we must go back and reconsider. When we finish a prayer we are saying in essence, "in agreement with Jesus' character we pray, Amen." Is that the reality of our

prayers? If we are to be a powerful people of prayer, we must pray in line with God's will and character.

As we pray in Jesus name may we be humbled by the fact that Jesus has made a way for us to come near to God. May we be strengthened in the fact that there is power in the name of Jesus. And may we pray the type of prayers that Jesus would pray.

Pastor Tim L. Melton