



THEME: CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Bible Study 1: Answered Prayer – Delighting in the Lord.

INTRODUCTION When we come to the subject of answered prayer or indeed any of the promises of God, one thing we see is that the promises of God are given into a particular context. All of the promises of God are in fact established in covenant language and covenant form. This means that as part of an agreement that the Lord has established with man there are conditions on each one of us IF we are to see covenant promises fully manifested in our lives. We see that many of the promises in covenant relationship are defined with conditions of a Holy God attached to them. Answered prayer is one of those promises that is clearly given us in Scripture. However there are some clear conditions that need to be part of our lives if answered prayer is going to be an ongoing reality for us. Read – Deuteronomy 30 v 11 – 20, Galatians 6 v 7 – 10, Matthew 6 v 14 – 15,

DISCUSS – When we look at God’s promises why do you think the Lord puts conditions on them?

Why do you think the Lord would answer our prayers and give us the experience of answered prayer?

What do you think are the reasons many Christians struggle to believe in answered prayer?

TEACHING SLOT – Called not to fret about life – BUT to TRUST in the Lord.

In Psalm 37 verses 1–9 we see that David calls us as God’s people not to fret and worry about the things that evil and sinful people do. He makes it clear that whatever happens in the lives of those who are around us, good or bad, life is fragile and is here today and gone tomorrow. What is being said here is that all that we have in life is fragile and wastes away, therefore there is no point in worrying about that which can be taken away. In fact David points us to the One in whom eternity rests. He points us to the One who will guard our lives and establish our futures. David’s active call to us is to trust in the Lord, trust in His promises in such a way that the problems and the worries of this world do not take root in our lives. The reason He calls us to do this is because he sees that the Lord is good, that His promises are good and in Him we will not only find good pastures but live in a place of good pasture. David sees that for those who trust in the Lord and do good in their lives and relationships, he believes the Lord will reward with good things. What he establishes is the promise of answered prayer that is established on a Godly condition.

DISCUSS – Why do you think that even Christians get trapped in circles of worry and anxiety?

What do you think we can do to train our minds and emotions against these worries?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS– Psalm 37 v 1 – 4, Matthew 7 v 7, John 15 v 7, John 15 v 16

TEACHING SLOT – The “Yes” on God’s lips.

When we look at Scripture one of the first conditions of answered prayer is that we “Delight in the Lord,” that we delight ourselves in the Lord. This verse makes it clear that the Lord WILL give us the desires of our hearts. This WILL is found in the centre of the Father’s desires to give good gifts to His children. In Matthew 7 verse 7 we see how Jesus Himself establishes the fact that the Lord is willing to positively answer our prayers. Three times Jesus declares that the Lord will respond positively to the needs and requests of His people. As God’s people we need to stand against the unbelief that the world can cultivate in our hearts that tells us God does not answer prayer or if He does He does so grudgingly. For time and time again Scripture declares God WILL answer our prayers and give us the desire of our hearts.

However the issue here is that the Lord can not give us a promise like this to us without conditions. In fact it would be irresponsible of God to give us an open ended promise to all people in all ways to indulge the lusts and desires of our hearts without conditions. It does not take much imagination to consider the sort of chaos, disorder and instability that would be created as different people got exactly what they asked for even when desires contradicted each other. So here we see that our heavenly Father puts His “Yes” puts His promise of answered prayer into a protective context. That context is that only those who “delight in the Lord.” will see their prayers on a consistent level be answered.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:- Matthew 6 v 33, John 6 v 38, John 4 v 34, John 5 v 9

TEACHING SLOT – What it means to delight in the Lord.

The basis of this concept is founded in two words:- passion and commitment. What is being said here is that delighting in the Lord is about those who’s hearts and minds are set on the Lord and His ways. It is about those who love the Lord with a passion and who love His ways and actions. Delighting in the LORD is about taking joy in His nature and His purposes. What is being said here is that it is Christians who are joyfully passionate about God revealed character, His Kingdom and His will and who actively look to put these things first in their lives and see it as a privilege to do so who will see their prayers answered.

It is a simple truth that we cannot delight in the Lord if we are moaning all of the time. We cannot delight in the Lord if we are resentful about what we do not have and blame God for it. We cannot delight in the Lord if our service is done out of duty rather than out of joy.

The disposition of our hearts in joy, passion and service are fundamentally important to us if we want answered prayer to be our ongoing reality. This disposition is not just a desire that the Holy Spirit cultivates in our lives. It is a focus and decision that we will have as the people of Jesus as we fix our minds and hearts on the will and purposes of God. It is about actively choosing Jesus and His ways to trust in, follow and be the all consuming passion of our desires.

TEACHING SLOT – His Will my will

What is being declared here is that if the Lord is my consuming passion, If we recognise the goodness and rightness of His ways concerning not only ourselves, but this world that we live in, We will actively desire and submit ourselves to His ways and His Will As we abide in Christ and He in us, the mind of Christ will be revealed to us and His plans will be made manifest. Jesus Himself made it clear a number of times that His desire, His delight was to do the Will of His Heavenly Father. He actively says that this delight in the Father, this commitment to do the will of the Father was as spiritual food to Him that nourished His life. This shows us that a delight in the Lord, a love and passion for the Lord results in our hearts, minds and desires being centred and submitted to discover and do the perfect will of God so that His glory and name may be proclaimed. This is exciting because if this becomes our Christian reality we are in a place of spiritual breakthrough where the Lord will give us the desires of our hearts. The reason for this is because our desires are His desires, our ways are fixed on His and our passion is that His Kingdom will come and His will be done. In this context, **“Those who delight in the Lord will be given the desires of their hearts!”**