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Teaching Notes

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The Promises of Prayer, and Promises in Prayer

I. Promises Concerning Prayer

A. The Foundational Promise: From the Father to the Son

Psalm 2:8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

B. The Salvation Prayer

Psalm 50:15 call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.

Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

C. A Family Privilege

1. Key concept: Sin alienates God from answering prayer

Psalm 34:15-16 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry; ¹⁶ the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Proverbs 1:28-31 Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. ²⁹ Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, ³⁰ since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, ³¹ they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.

Isaiah 59:1-2 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Micah 3:4 Then they will cry out to the LORD, but he will not answer them. At that time he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done.

2. Salvation makes us adopted children of God

John 1:12 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God*

3. God treats His children's requests better than we treat our own

Matthew 7:7-11 *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"*

D. Universal Blessing Attached to Asking

1. Everyone who asks

a. See Matthew 7 above

b. So also Luke 11

Luke 11:10 *For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

2. Everything that is requested

John 14:13-14 *And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Matthew 21:22 *If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.*

E. Conditional Promises

1. The Need for Personal Holiness and Obedience

Psalm 91:14-16 *"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. ¹⁵ He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. ¹⁶ With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."*

John 15:7 *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*

1 Peter 3:10-12 *"Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. ¹¹ He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the*

righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

1 John 3:21-22 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

2. The Need for Faith

Mark 11:22-24 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. ²³ "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

James 1:6-8 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

3. The Need for Persistence

Matthew 7:7 "Keep on asking, and you will receive; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you..."

Thomas Manton: "If we don't receive by asking, then let us seek; if we don't receive by seeking, then let us knock."

Luke 18:1-8 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

4. The Need for Asking According to God's Name and Will

John 14:13-14 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 16:23-24 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴ Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

1 John 5:14-15 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him.

5. The Need for Boldness

Luke 11:5-8 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁶ because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' ⁷ "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

6. The Need for Fruitfulness for Increased Power in Prayer

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-- fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

F. Specific Cases in Prayer

1. Prayer for national revival

2 Chronicles 7:14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2. Prayer by the poor against injustice

Exodus 22:26-27 If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, ²⁷ because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.

3. Prayer for healing

James 5:14-18 *Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

4. Prayer for wisdom

James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

5. Prayer in cases of church discipline

Matthew 18:19-20 *"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*

II. Praying the Promises of God

Hebrews 10:22-23 *let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

2 Peter 1:3-5 *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to....*

A. Key Quotes on the Promises

Thomas Manton: "One way to get comfort is to plead the promise of God in prayer, show Him His handwriting: God is tender of His Word."

Christopher Nesse: "When God hath not a mouth to speak, men must not have a tongue to ask."

William Gurnall: “Furnish thyself with arguments from the promises to enforce thy prayers, and make them prevalent with God. The promises are the ground of faith, and faith, when strengthened, will make thee fervent, and such fervency ever speeds and returns with victory out of the field of prayer.... The mightier any is in the Word, the more mighty he will be in prayer.”

B. Key Examples from Scripture

1. David

2 Samuel 7:25-28 *"And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, ²⁶ so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, 'The LORD Almighty is God over Israel!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you. ²⁷ 'O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. ²⁸ O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.*

2. Psalmists

Psalm 119:38 *Fulfill your promise to your servant, so that you may be feared.*

Psalm 119:58 *I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise.*

Psalm 119:154 *Defend my cause and redeem me; preserve my life according to your promise.*

3. Isaiah and the “watchmen”

Isaiah 62:6-7 *I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, ⁷ and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.*

This verse from Isaiah is not exactly a promise from God, but in the context of Isaiah 62 it is praying based on a promise; God has revealed that He will reestablish Jerusalem and make her glorious again (See Isaiah 60). Thus persistence based on the promised glory of Jerusalem is key.

4. Daniel

a. The backdrop: God’s promise to restore Israel after seventy years

Jeremiah 29:10-14 *This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you*

back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity.

b. Daniel's corresponding prayer for God to do just that

Daniel 9:2-4 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. ³ So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. ⁴ I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands...

Daniel 9:17-18 "Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. ¹⁸ Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.

5. Nehemiah

Nehemiah 1:4-9 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵ Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. ⁸ "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

6. Jesus Christ

John 17:1-5 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

7. The Apostle Paul

2 Corinthians 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.