

Sovereign Grace Church

“In Jesus' Name” outline

January 28, 2018

Heidelberg Catechism: 117 and 118

This morning we will continue our study of the Heidelberg Catechism's teaching on prayer. For many Christians prayer is more duty than desire. This is often reflected in how they pray (only at set times and mostly for physical requests like deliverance from perceived inconvenience or trouble).

When we do find ourselves delivered from a problem our first response is often not praise and thanksgiving to our Deliverer, but rather a sense of contentment that life is back to where it is supposed to be and with our resuming the status quo. Even in our prayers for deliverance it is usually only after a concentrated effort to deliver ourselves in our own strength. This is probably why some of the more effective prayers begin with.... 'Lord, if you're up there,...you know I'm not a praying man....but I'm at the end of my rope down here....'

This prayer is honest and effective....but also sad. Why? Because we have always been “at the end of our rope” and just haven't realized it! God, in His grace and mercy, sometimes allows us to go through some very brutal times in order that we might learn these things and then to seek His company & power in their resolution. This morning we will consider how we should pray such that God will hear our prayers...hearing in the sense of paying attention. And then also for what we should pray.

1. Does God always hear prayer?

- Hearing vs. Paying Attention
Isa. 1: 15
- Our Prayers will reflect our Beliefs
Psm 94: 9; Lk 11: 11-13

2. How should we pray? HC 117

- We should pray from our Hearts.
Heb. 10: 22; Psm 145: 18; Jn 4: 22-24
- We should pray in awareness of our Needs and Condition.
Rev. 3: 17; Lk 18: 11; Isa 26: 16; Isa 66: 2
- We should pray in dependence on our Identification w/ Jesus
Jn 14: 12-14

Q. What does it mean to pray “in Jesus' Name”?
II Chron. 16: 9; Phil 4: 6-7

Q. Why do effective prayers demand a proper knowledge of who God is?
Lk 15: 3-7; Gen. 4: 6-7; Ezk. 33: 11; Lk 23: 34

3. For what should we pray? HC 118

- **Carnal Requests: Praying for things motivated by the Kingdom of Self.**
Jms 4: 3
- **Spiritual Requests: Praying for things motivated by the Kingdom of Jesus**
I Kings 3: 9-12a; Matt. 6: 33

Questions for Conversation and Reflection

- 1. How would you describe your prayer life? What is Dallas Willard attempting to get at when he contrasts a “prayer life” with a “praying life” ? Do you have a “praying life”? How would one go about getting a “praying life.” Does having a “praying life” mean you don't have times of more focused and purposed prayer?**
- 2. Do you regard prayer as more of a duty or a pleasure? When you pray, do you find yourself doing a monologue or having a conversation with a Friend? Why does God desire our company, especially if God is all-sufficient in His Triune Being? Does God's desire for our company reflect His personal need? Or is it a simple reflection of who He is as an all loving being? What is the difference?**
- 3. Do you pray for spiritual needs or material wants? Do you pray to become more humble, less angry, less bitter, more Christ-like? Do you pray for these things because you really desire them or because you think you should desire them even though you really don't? Why is it important to be honest with God? Why is it important to have an accurate understanding of who His is?**
- 4. Some Christians believe that it is wrong to pray for themselves? Why is this a mistake? How should we go about praying for ourselves? How are ways that our spiritual condition makes a difference in the lives of those around us? What does it mean to pray “in my name” vs. praying “in Jesus' name”?**