What is the Goal of Prayer?

Mark 11: 22-24

Prayer is one of our most engaged-in behaviors in the time of trouble than any other activity. Many do not understand the source of prayers' power. By that I mean, what is the main ingredient we bring to the altar of prayer? We bring faith, but what is the object or purpose of faith when we pray? Our goal is to have our prayers answered and if we are at all honest with ourselves that is why we engage in prayer. Is that the real goal of prayer?
The question that is seldom asked is: Is prayer really an extension of our hearts desires? Many believe that it is and they have scripture to support this position. There are so many scriptures that seem to push us in that direction. When we read Mark 11:22, which says, "**Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.**"

This scripture speaks to the faith required to have our prayers answered. It seems to say without hesitation or equivocation that with enough faith our prayers will be answered. Many embrace this text as **the mandate** for answered prayer.

However, as I re-read this text, the first four words jumped out at me for the very first time. These words not only carry the weight of who this faith is directed toward, but also who is in charge of the outcome

of our prayer. It says from the very beginning who is in control. Our faith is not in charge, but who our faith focused on. These words speak to the *object* of our faith who is God and where our faith should be totally deposited. It speaks to the role we play as we engage in prayer. It reduces our role from the very start. It places less emphasis on our faith in the answered prayer and more in our trusting in God. It says "**Have faith in God**." Trust in what God is going to do in this situation. Place your faith in trusting God. Mark 11:22 is not suggesting or saying that our every prayer is going to be answered. Although many take this text to mean exactly that. What is being said is much more profound than that. It means that we must trust God for the outcome. Have faith that God is going to do what is needed in each and every situation. **God does not exist to answer our wish or whim but for us to request the will of God to be lived out in our lives**. Whether we are in a grave circumstance or not. Prayer is always to be engaged in, entered into in total and complete submission to God's will. Mark 14:35-36 says, "(**35**) **And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. (36) And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. He said, "Abba, Father all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but Your will be done. This is further amplified by 1 John 5:14, "And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."**

The goal of prayer is always the will of God. It always has been. The scriptures have always been very clear about this. However, it is our desire to control the outcome outside of the will of God that has caused so many to suffer because of our unwillingness to accept the

will of God. How do we get to this place where the will of God is acceptable to us? To ourselves? It requires a trust that gives up all that we have in total submission to God. Proverbs 3:5-6, "**Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight**." This kind of faith requires more of us than we often want to give. The power and force of this scripture has slipped the grasp of many. For the entire Christian relationship with God is located in this single text. This text leaves nothing in its meaning to be muddied. It says without equivocation give yourself, your thoughts, your being, your dreams, your plans, your health, your life to God and trust nothing else, no one else but God. It is upon this foundation that all prayer stands. It is on this rock of trust and complete compliance and acceptance that Jesus trusted God in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was not what Jesus wanted that mattered. Remember it is Jesus who spoke the words of Mark 11:22. Yet, in Jesus' greatest moment of distress Jesus asks for something to be done that would save Him. Finally, the heart and soul of prayer was revealed. It is always the will of God that is at the center of prayer. Not what we want, but what God wants. Finally, prayer, sincere prayer, cannot be engaged without a profound love for God and an acceptance of His will. We are called to love God with all of our heart, soul and mind. This is attitude the disposition that we are called to engage prayer with. Without this attitude prayer becomes a frustrating activity that we feebly try to control. We engage a divine enterprise, a supernatural power with earthly tools and believe we can control the outcome with a faith that God gives us to serve Him and promote His will. The mere audacity is something I encourage us to consider the next time we pray with the idea of asking for anything beyond the ability to accept His will in our lives.

This is the most humbling of places and the only place where the peace that passes all understanding is found. Knowing we are in the hands of God is the most secure place anyone can find themselves. Yet it is still the most frightening of places for most of us to seek in our faith position.

Prayer is not only our sanctuary, it can become our home. Where the solace of a Protective Father and a Loving God is always present. Seek God daily for all your strength and comfort.

Blessings,
Pastor Gool