

## Chapter 20

### Ask And It Will Be Given

#### BIBLE

They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the Good News to many villages of the Samaritans.<sup>1</sup>

When they had arrived, and had gathered the assembly together, they reported all the things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith to the nations.<sup>2</sup>

When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were gathered together. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.<sup>3</sup>

They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."<sup>4</sup> God, having raised up his servant Jesus, sent him to you first to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your wickedness.<sup>5</sup>

"Don't be deceived, my beloved brothers."<sup>6</sup> Pray without ceasing.<sup>7</sup> Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.<sup>8</sup>

#### COMMENTARY

<sup>1</sup> **Acts 8:25** [*"They" are the Beatles*]

<sup>2</sup> **Acts 14:27**

<sup>3</sup> **Acts 4:31** As the group prays, they are lifted up in consciousness so that the power of God can express itself through them. Kahlil Gibran: "What is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living ether?"

<sup>4</sup> **Acts 16:31** We are "saved" when we believe in the teachings of Jesus, in the life that he demonstrated for us, and in the way that he approached his own death, showing us that there is nothing to fear in dying since we are eternal spiritual beings. We can live our best life when we live it according to spiritual law, aligning ourselves with the Christ presence.

<sup>5</sup> **Acts 3:26** Jesus came first to bless us with his example and his teachings. This is the religion *of* Jesus. The religion *about* Jesus, his sacrificial atonement, came later. Jesus never asked us to worship him.

<sup>6</sup> **James 1:16**

<sup>7</sup> **1 Thessalonians 5:17** To "pray without ceasing" means to remain in alignment with the Christ.

<sup>8</sup> **1 Peter 5:8** "Take a good look around you," Paul advises us in "Martha My Dear."

“Let your eyes look straight ahead. Fix your gaze directly before you.<sup>9</sup> Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.<sup>10</sup>

“Don't be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.<sup>11</sup> Be subject therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you.<sup>12</sup>

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving.<sup>13</sup> All things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.<sup>14</sup>

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it didn't rain on the earth for three years and six months.<sup>15</sup>

“Hezekiah prayed before Yahweh, and said, ‘Yahweh, the God of Israel, who sit above the cherubim, you are the God, even you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth.’<sup>16</sup> Yahweh listened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>9</sup> **Proverbs 4:25**

<sup>10</sup> **Romans 12:21** We don't overcome “evil” by resisting it. Instead, we keep our focus on God, on the principle of goodness. When we live in spirit, backwards living (“evil” is “live” spelled in reverse) has no power over us.

<sup>11</sup> **Luke 12:32** The Universe is set up in our favor, biased for our good.

<sup>12</sup> **James 4:7** When confronted with something that has the potential to arouse strong emotions in us, the key is not to resist, because that only gives the situation more power. What we resist persists. What we do resist, however, is a habitual pattern of wrong thinking, “the devil.”

<sup>13</sup> **Colossians 4:2** Paramhansa Yogananda: “After deep prayer and meditation the devotee is in touch with his divine consciousness; there is no greater power than that inward protection.”

<sup>14</sup> **Matthew 21:22** The success of the Beatles was itself an answered prayer. John: “When I was a Beatle, I thought we were the best goddamn group in the world. And believing that was what made us what we were!”

<sup>15</sup> **James 5:17** Mahatma Gandhi: “If your wishes are pure, then they become true.”

<sup>16</sup> **2 Kings 19:15**

<sup>17</sup> **2 Chronicles 30:20**

“Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, ‘Oh that you would bless me indeed, and enlarge my border! May your hand be with me, and may you keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!’ God granted him that which he requested.”<sup>18</sup>

“Also delight yourself in Yahweh, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”<sup>19</sup> Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you.<sup>20</sup>

“You ask, and don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it for your pleasures.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> **1 Chronicles 4:10** This verse was the basis for the hugely successful book *The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking Through to the Blessed Life* (Bruce Wilkinson)

<sup>19</sup> **Psalm 37:4** Paul: “One sweet dream came true today.” (“You Never Give Me Your Money”)

<sup>20</sup> **Matthew 7:7** As Eric Butterworth points out in his classic *Discover the Power Within You*, the word “ask” has multiple meanings, such as to demand, request, inquire, or claim. For example, when you ask the valet for your car as you leave an establishment, you are actually *claiming* it since the vehicle is already yours. Effective prayer is *claiming* our Divine nature rather than *requesting* things that we don't have. When we ask for qualities such as wisdom, peace, prosperity, strength, health, or joy, we are actually claiming what is already ours. And since we are seeking first the kingdom within, then the *things* we want will be added to us. But if we ask for the *things* first (as in “Please God, give me a new car”), our prayer may go unanswered.

<sup>21</sup> **James 4:3** When we ask with wrong motives, we are out of alignment with our sacred self, and Spirit will not be able to fully express itself through us. We will be limited in what comes back to us from the Universe.

“But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.<sup>22</sup>

“In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking.<sup>23</sup> Therefore don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him.<sup>24</sup>

“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father, who is in heaven, may also forgive you your transgressions.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> **Matthew 6:6** The inner room is the secret place within our own mind where we experience the presence of the Divine, where we align with the Christ. The universal prayer ritual of placing our hands together and pointing them upwards is a physical alignment that can remind us that the purpose of prayer is spiritual alignment.

<sup>23</sup> **Matthew 6:7** Soren Kierkegaard: “The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.”

<sup>24</sup> **Matthew 6:8** The Father, or the God within, knows what we need before we ask because what we are asking for is already ours. It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom.

<sup>25</sup> **Mark 11:25** For our prayer to work, we have to align ourselves in consciousness with God. For instance, praying for prosperity will not work if we are habitually engaged in affirmations of lack such as “I am always broke” or “I could never afford that.”

Prayer *is* alignment. If we are harboring unforgiveness against someone, we are out of alignment, and as a consequence we will be unable to feel God's love in our heart. God is not punishing us, we are simply in a lower state of consciousness.

“Pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.’<sup>26</sup> Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.’<sup>27</sup> Give us today our daily bread’<sup>28</sup>

“Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.’<sup>29</sup> Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.’<sup>30</sup>

“Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, even as also with you.’<sup>31</sup>

“For this cause, we also, since the day we heard this, don’t cease praying and making requests for you, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.’<sup>32</sup> For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. We also pray for this: your becoming perfect.’<sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> **Matthew 6:9** The Lord’s Prayer is a powerful series of affirmations that we can use to bring us into alignment with who we really are. This verse affirms that God is holy: perfect, good, whole and complete.

<sup>27</sup> **Matthew 6:10** This verse affirms our intention to follow God’s will.

<sup>28</sup> **Matthew 6:11** In this verse, we are not reminding the Divine that we need something to eat each day. We are affirming that God provides all that we need at all times.

<sup>29</sup> **Matthew 6:12** This verse affirms God’s unconditional love and expresses our intention to let His presence flow through us as we forgive others. When we forgive, we feel forgiven. Everything is happening simultaneously: we receive forgiveness in the act of forgiveness.

<sup>30</sup> **Matthew 6:13** This verse affirms that God is forever wanting to lift us up in consciousness and deliver us from our own misguided thoughts. Paul McCartney: “We live in hope of deliverance from the darkness that surrounds us.” (“Hope Of Deliverance”)

<sup>31</sup> **2 Thessalonians 3:1**

<sup>32</sup> **Colossians 1:9**

<sup>33</sup> **2 Corinthians 13:9** Deepak Chopra: “Prayer is you speaking to God. Meditation is allowing the spirit to speak to you.”

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>34</sup>

“Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in Yahweh.<sup>35</sup> Yahweh takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his loving kindness.<sup>36</sup>

“Working together, we entreat also that you not receive the grace of God in vain.<sup>37</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.<sup>38</sup>

“You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.<sup>39</sup> Confess your offenses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The insistent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective.<sup>40</sup>

“Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praises.”<sup>41</sup>

They, being sent on their way by the assembly, passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles. They caused great joy to all the brothers.<sup>42</sup>

They went out, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>34</sup> **Romans 15:13** Real joy and peace is found simply in believing. This means knowing who we really are, knowing that we are part of a greater whole, knowing that the Universe is set up in our favor to give us what we want. Getting what we want, however, does not provide real happiness, because the satisfaction is short lived. Once we get what we want, we are happy for a little while, then we just want something else. Success is not getting what we want; rather it is earning the right in consciousness to get what we want.

<sup>35</sup> **Psalm 33:18** (Anonymous) “Don’t lose hope. You never know what tomorrow may bring.”

<sup>36</sup> **Psalm 147:11** Fyodor Dostoevsky: “To live without hope is to cease to live”

<sup>37</sup> **2 Corinthians 6:1**

<sup>38</sup> **Ephesians 2:8**

<sup>39</sup> **2 Corinthians 6:12**

<sup>40</sup> **James 5:16** Oswald Chambers: “We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties.”

<sup>41</sup> **James 5:13** Augustine: “He who sings prays twice.”

<sup>42</sup> **Acts 15:3** [*“They” are the Beatles*]

<sup>43</sup> **Mark 16:20** Rev. Michael Beckwith: “Meditation and prayer have withstood the test of time. They work today as perfectly as they did for those who first practiced and perfected them.”